



## **PAKISTAN AND ISRAEL**

**With articles by**

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**April 2009**

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## PREFACE

I am pleased to present *Pakistan and Israel*, the third in the new series of Stimson publications addressing the questions of how the elimination of nuclear weapons might be achieved. Stimson's project on nuclear security explores the practical dimensions of this critical 21<sup>st</sup> century debate, to identify both political and technical obstacles that could block the road to "zero," and to outline how each of these could be removed. Led by Stimson's co-founder and Distinguished Fellow Dr. Barry Blechman, the project provides useful analyses that can help US and world leaders make the elimination of nuclear weapons a realistic and viable option. The series comprises country assessments, to be published in six different monographs, and a separate volume on technical issues.

This third monograph, with analyses by Brigadier General Shlomo Brom (Retired) of the Institute for National Security Studies at Tel Aviv University and Brigadier General Feroz Khan (Retired) of the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, California, address nuclear disarmament as seen by countries that view their nuclear arsenals as vital to offset a strategic adversary's greater size and actual or potential conventional military capabilities. The papers follow the volumes *France and the United Kingdom* and *China and India*.

Each of the country assessments considers the security conditions that need to be met before the government in question would participate in a multilateral disarmament process. The fourth monograph in the series will examine the two newest nuclear aspirants — North Korea and Iran. Later publications will look at the nuclear superpowers, Russia and the United States, and countries with advanced civilian nuclear capabilities that could be future weapon states, such as Brazil, Japan, and Turkey.

Later in the year, a set of papers assessing such technical issues as verification, warhead dismantling, and governance of a disarmament treaty regime will be published in a single volume, complementing this series of country assessments.

This new series makes an important contribution to the new and renewed debate about how to rid the world of the dangers of nuclear weapons. This enduring strategic issue has been a central concern of the Stimson Center since its founding twenty years ago. I hope that this new publication will provide insights and pragmatic ideas to facilitate wise policymaking, in keeping with Stimson tradition.

Sincerely,



Ellen Laipson

## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the twin threats of proliferation and terrorism have led to a growing chorus of world leaders calling for the global elimination of nuclear weapons. Now, thousands of individuals from around the world and across political lines have come together in a new project called *Global Zero*. The project combines policy research and analyses with broad-based and sustained public outreach to encourage key governments to negotiate a comprehensive agreement to eliminate all nuclear weapons through phased and verified reductions.

In support of *Global Zero* and the many other ongoing efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons, and in collaboration with the World Security Institute, the Stimson Center has commissioned a series of papers examining the strategic obstacles that block the achievement of zero nuclear weapons world-wide. Written from the perspectives of individual countries that either possess nuclear weapons or have the potential to develop them relatively quickly, the papers describe those nations' official views on, and plans for, nuclear weapons, as well as how the prospect of wide-spread proliferation and the possibility of nuclear disarmament might change those perspectives. The primary purpose of each paper is to identify the policies and international developments that would encourage decision-makers in each nation to look favorably on a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons by a date certain.

The third pair of papers in the series, *Pakistan*, by Brigadier General Feroz Khan (Retired), and *Israel*, by Brigadier General Shlomo Brom (Retired), are published together in this volume. Pakistan and Israel have a shared, but otherwise unique, perspective on their nuclear capabilities. They see them as not only deterring the use nuclear weapons by other nations, but also as offsetting the greater resources and therefore actual or potential superior conventional military capabilities of adversaries – enemies with whom they have fought wars in the past. The two papers make clear that not only would dedicated US leadership be required to lead these countries to nuclear disarmament negotiations, but that, in addition, specific steps would have to be taken to reduce the threats perceived by Israel and Pakistan, giving them the confidence to join the other nuclear-armed countries in multilateral reductions. Of the two, Israel probably poses the greater challenge.

This series of papers has been made possible by grants from the World Security Institute (with the support of the Carnegie Corporation of New York) and the Ploughshares Fund, as well as by gifts from individual donors. The Stimson Center and the series' editor are grateful for their generosity. The views expressed in the papers are those of the writers. They do not necessarily represent the views of the Stimson Center, the sponsoring organizations, or of *Global Zero*.

### **Barry M. Blechman**

Distinguished Fellow, The Stimson Center and Research Coordinator, *Global Zer*

# PAKISTAN'S PERSPECTIVE ON THE GLOBAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

*Feroz Hassan Khan*\*

Pakistan approaches nuclear weapons differently than any other nuclear weapon state. In the broad scheme of world politics, Pakistan is a small country. It has neither a decisive say nor a strong belief regarding the role of nuclear weapons in international security. It is, however, a proactive participant in nuclear diplomacy and, as a *de facto* nuclear power, the establishment of global nuclear norms, non-proliferation regimes, and new developments regarding disarmament will have direct bearing on its national security. Pakistani policy makers have called consistently for regional nuclear disarmament and regional arms control regimes as preludes to the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

Pakistan was not the first country to introduce nuclear weapons to South Asia.<sup>†</sup> Pakistani leaders believe that had India not been obsessed with competing against China, the region below the Himalayas may well have remained a nuclear-weapons-free zone.<sup>‡</sup> Pakistan's nuclear capability was thus the third step in nuclear proliferation in Asia. The introduction of nuclear weapons to South Asia's

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† Nuclear weapons were formally introduced to South Asia in May 1974 when India conducted a nuclear test, which it called a "Peaceful Nuclear Explosion (PNE)" under an ironic codename "Smiling Buddha." India argues that it did not weaponize its nuclear capabilities after the test, putting the onus on Pakistan for being the first to go nuclear. From Pakistan's viewpoint, however, the 1974 explosion was the first validation of India's nuclear arsenal and galvanized the nascent Pakistani nuclear research into a full-fledged weapons program and triggered the nuclear arms competition. See George Perkovich, *India's Nuclear Bomb: Impact on Global Proliferation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pages 161-189. In 1983, India embarked on the Integrated Guided Missile Program (IGMP), which again led Pakistan to develop missile options to deliver nuclear weapons. See for details, Rodney W. Jones et. al., *Tracking Nuclear Proliferation: A Guide in Maps and Charts* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1998), pages 127-29 and Naeem Salik, "Missiles Issues in South Asia," *The Non-Proliferation Review* (Summer 2002), pages 47-55.

‡ India's ambitions regarding nuclear weapons date back to the period prior to independence. Indian leader Jawaharlal Nehru in a public speech in 1946 said, "I hope Indian scientists will use the atomic force for constructive purposes, but if India is threatened she will inevitably try to defend herself by all means at her disposal." Quoted in Kamal Matinuddin, *The Nuclearization of South Asia* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), page 61. After independence, in 1948 in an address to the Constituent Assembly, Nehru stated, "The atomic bombs that had forced Japan's surrender and ended the Second World War just a few years before had left a powerful impression on the minds of nationalist leaders, reinforcing the power of science for state ends, and India's own shortcomings in this regard." See Constituent Assembly of India, *Legislative Debates*, Second session, Vol. 5 (1948), pages 3328-34. Also, see further details in George Perkovich, *op. cit.*, pages 13-25.

profoundly complicated political and security challenges made resolution of existing conflicts more difficult and more dangerous, and intensified the competition between India and Pakistan.

Pakistan inherited enormous structural problems when it was granted independence in 1947 and continues to struggle on multiple fronts. One of its many problems is the search to define its national identity—a struggle between the secular ideals of modern leaders (who conceived the idea of Pakistan) and the theocratic aspirations of religious organizations and leaders (who see Pakistan as a platform for rising political Islam). Pakistan's security has been threatened throughout its existence by both external and internal challenges. Today, national security challenges – including internal instability and immense socio-economic issues – are tearing apart the Pakistani state and society. Nuclear weapons in themselves can do little to bring stability within the country.<sup>1</sup>

Although initially reluctant to go nuclear in the 1960s, for most Pakistanis nuclear weapons have now become essential to its national survival and a critical factor in its domestic political culture.<sup>2</sup> The consensus on maintaining a nuclear deterrent capability is a rare symbol of national unity in a country more recognized for lack of a common narrative on most aspects of national policy.

When the US “Atoms for Peace” plan was offered in the 1950s and 1960s, Pakistan complied strictly with the letter and spirit of President Eisenhower's initiative, developing nuclear technology solely for peaceful purposes and supporting nuclear disarmament. Strongly affected by the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, its leaders were conscious of being a developing country emerging from the yolk of colonialism. Pakistani leaders were eager to embrace modernity and nuclear technology was considered the cutting edge of scientific understanding. Exploring the application of nuclear technology as weapons was a luxury Pakistan could ill afford. It was a new state grappling with abject poverty, deprivation, and general penury; a situation which has remained constant throughout most of its turbulent political history. That struggle continues even after 60 years of survival, despite progress in several areas of national life, and, most importantly, the development and operational deployment of an unspecified number of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery.<sup>3</sup>

The key argument of this paper is that Pakistan is not the primary driver of nuclear weapons proliferation, neither in the world nor in the region in which it resides. Pakistan's acquisition and continuing support of nuclear weapons is the result of its security environment. For a state struggling for national consolidation and survival, a world at peace – with or without nuclear weapons – is the highest aspiration. On

its own, Pakistan would be unable to detach itself from the deterrent value it now places on nuclear weapons, which it believes provide it with national security assurances otherwise not available to it.

This paper examines Pakistan's position on the central question of the prospects of global nuclear disarmament in four major parts: the motivating factors that led to Pakistan's acquisition and continued modernization of nuclear weapons; the security parameters upon which Pakistan's nuclear plans are based and possible roles of nuclear weapons in foreign policy; Pakistan's position on global nuclear proliferation; and, potential Pakistani reactions to a global move towards the elimination of all nuclear weapons in all nations.

### **FACTORS MOTIVATING PAKISTAN TO ACQUIRE AND MODERNIZE ITS NUCLEAR WEAPONS**

Few nations in the world today face a security predicament comparable to Pakistan's; the country's history is essentially a story of national survival. Pakistan's attachment to nuclear weapons is best explained through the "realist theory" of nuclear proliferation, which treats a state's decision to build nuclear weapons primarily as a function of its level of insecurity.<sup>4</sup>

Made independent as a result of communal religious violence and the resulting massive migrations of populations, and surrounded by much larger neighbors, Pakistan's insecurity would be understandable even absent the fact that key adjacent countries seem unreconciled to the nation's founding. Afghanistan, for example, questioned Pakistan's existence and quarreled over the contours of the Pak-Afghan border.<sup>§</sup> India was always wary of partition, fearing that the example of Pakistan's independence might inspire other minority groups to seek secession. Pakistan was born "truncated and moth-eaten" as the founder of the country, Muhammad Ali Jinnah, described it, and, as reported in *Life Magazine* in January 1948, the world doubted that the new Muslim nation, lacking both the institutions and the infrastructure of government, could survive.<sup>5</sup> From the very beginning, the new nation-state depended on the support of the Western nations, which required building and modernizing its armed forces and forging alliances with greater powers.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>§</sup> Afghanistan voted against Pakistan's proposed membership in the UN in 1947. In 1949, Afghanistan unilaterally revoked the 1893 agreement signed by Afghanistan and the British Empire that delineated the border between then British India and Afghanistan. This revanchist claim to territories in Pakistan's western provinces (North West Frontier Province and Baluchistan) resulted in the birth of the "Pashtunistan" (land of the Pashtuns) movement, which in turn was nurtured and supported by India and later by the Soviet Union. Pakistan faced a two-front dilemma from its birth.

Pakistan's perspective on nuclear weapons thus is founded on the search for security to ensure the permanence of the Pakistani state. The Pakistan case is analogous to another state—Israel. Driven by identical fears and concerns, both states were founded by a people who felt persecuted or marginalized when living as a minority in other countries, sought basic religious rights, and eventually won statehood. Both faced immediate political and security dilemmas. Living under the shadow of hostility from powerful neighbors, Pakistan and Israel followed identical strategic policies after having fought wars with their neighbors and facing physical threats of annihilation. Both sought external alliances with great powers. But, also in both cases, such external support failed to alleviate security concerns and “both ultimately concluded that outsiders could not be trusted in a moment of extreme crisis, and this led them to develop nuclear weapons.”\*\*

### SECURITY CONCERNS

Pakistan's initiation of a covert nuclear program and ultimate creation of an operational nuclear deterrent is the outcome of a four-decade long debate about competing threat analyses and conceptions about national security among Pakistani politicians, scientists, and military leaders.<sup>7</sup>

Weak states, like Pakistan, confronting threats to their existence, have several fundamental options to survive. They can “bandwagon” by accepting another's dominance and appease the powers making threats against it. Alternatively, they can seek to balance “internally” by relying on their own military capabilities or “externally” by relying on the military capabilities of allies.<sup>8</sup> A third possibility is to involve international institutions like the UN and World Bank to help alleviate security concerns and resolve conflicts.<sup>9</sup>

Pakistan has pursued each of these potential options in its desire to balance growing Indian power and other regional threats. In Pakistan's experience, however, alliances proved to be unreliable, especially in times of international crises, building sufficient conventional military capabilities was excessively expensive, and international institutions were capricious, at best. After its military defeat by India in the 1971 war that led to the secession of the eastern portion of Pakistan as the independent nation of Bangladesh, Pakistani defense planners concluded that national survival could not be left to the good-will of others. Consequently, Pakistan determined that its security could only be ensured by matching India's conventional and nuclear capabilities. This strategy of internal balancing remains

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\*\* One essential difference between Israel and Pakistan, however, is that Pakistan faced annihilation threats from a hostile neighbor with superior conventional and nuclear capabilities, whereas Israel has repeatedly demonstrated its military superiority over its hostile neighbors. Stephen P Cohen, *India: Emerging Power* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2001), page 204.

the preferred course of Pakistani military and political leaders as they continue to experience threats from unreconciled neighbors.<sup>10</sup> At a fundamental level, all nuclear weapon development programs constitute a response to insecurity and a form of balancing foreign threats. In sum, military insecurity stimulated Pakistan's interest in acquiring and modernizing its nuclear weapons.

The primary purpose of Pakistan's acquisition of nuclear capabilities was (and remains) to offset the larger conventional forces and military threats posed by India. Under the leadership of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a modest start in the nuclear program was made in 1972 after the humiliating military defeat in the 1971 war. This initial quest was meant as a hedging strategy to develop an option for "just in case."<sup>11</sup> But the Indian test of a so-called "nuclear device" in 1974 complicated the straightforward imbalance of conventional forces and meant that a structurally weak and geographically vulnerable Pakistan now faced a combined threat from nuclear and conventional forces. These military imbalances, now in existence for nearly four decades, have been compounded by the emergence of new Indian military doctrines that contemplate fighting and winning either a conventional or a nuclear war in the region.<sup>12</sup>

Pakistani leaders believe that their nuclear weapons deter war and, if deterrence failed, could deny victory, thereby dissuading potential adversaries from initiating a conflict.<sup>13</sup> As the late Sir Michael Quinlan noted, "Pakistan's rejection of no-first-use seems merely a natural refusal to lighten or simplify a stronger adversary's assessment of risk; it implies the retention of an option, not a positive policy of first use as a preferred course."<sup>14</sup>

Relations with India have improved in fits and starts in recent years, but they remain adversarial in nature. The enduring rivalry between India and Pakistan is over several interlinked issues concerning territory and national identity, as well as political influence and relative power in the region.<sup>15</sup> Pakistani fears are compounded by the belief that India seeks to encircle Pakistan geo-politically and that India seeks revenge for what it believes to be decades of Pakistani support to various insurgencies within India.<sup>††</sup> Indian and Pakistani forces have been deployed along the Line of Control (LOC) in the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir for over six decades and, despite some progress toward normalization of relations,

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<sup>††</sup> Pakistan's concerns stem from allegations of India's influence and activities through its embassy and consulates in Afghanistan and Iran's support of insurgencies in Pakistan's volatile western provinces of Baluchistan and North West Frontier Province. See Henry D Sokolski ed., *Pakistan's Nuclear Future: Worries Beyond War* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, January 2008), page 3; Barnett R Rubin, "Saving Afghanistan," *Foreign Affairs* (January/February, 2007), page 73. For a skeptical view of Pakistan's official position, see Ahmad Rashid, *Descent into Chaos: The United States and the Failure of Nation Building in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Central Asia* (New York: Viking, 2008), page 248.

tensions continue. With the balance of both conventional forces and nuclear capabilities favoring India, Pakistan remains concerned about India's intentions.<sup>16</sup> India's modernization of its military forces appears to be primarily oriented against Pakistan and, as noted, its new military doctrine envisages fighting conventional wars under a nuclear umbrella.<sup>17</sup>

India's new military doctrine, "Cold Start," was developed in the wake of military crises in 1999 and 2001-02.<sup>18</sup> During the latter crisis, India and Pakistan had completely mobilized their military forces for war. The United States sought to defuse the crisis through diplomacy, and the counter-mobilizations and risk of a nuclear exchange made the possible cost of war prohibitively high. The crisis de-escalated only after a 10-month stand-off, however, and gave birth to new military scenarios that, from the Indian side, envisage rapid force mobilization, followed by attacks on a broad front with multiple thrusts by mechanized forces in shallow maneuvers that would call, what they consider to be, Pakistan's nuclear bluff. The primary rationale of the concept is to give Indian leaders the possibility of responding militarily to a terrorist event in India that is believed to be sponsored by Pakistan.<sup>‡‡</sup> The underlying objective is to undergird political leaders' decision-making, preempt international diplomatic intervention to defuse the crisis, and beat the Pakistani military's counter-mobilization capability. Although Pakistan normally could respond more quickly due to the relatively short distances to its borders, India assumes it could keep military operations below Pakistani nuclear red-lines. Indian military planners are confident that even if they do not read the Pakistani nuclear red-lines correctly, by acting quickly to defeat Pakistan's conventional forces and by posing the threat of massive Indian retaliatory nuclear strikes, it will be impossible for Pakistan to escalate to the nuclear level.<sup>19</sup>

Pakistani threat perceptions include the risk of a preemptive Indian strike using state of the art conventional air forces or missiles against its leadership, infrastructure, military forces, and even nuclear facilities. Pakistani leaders have warned about the possibility of preventive strikes against Pakistani nuclear installations or strategic assets for some time. These concerns were reinforced after Israel's successful destruction of Iraq's Osiraq reactor in 1981. In 1984, there were revelations in the media of Indian plans to undertake a similar venture against Pakistan. Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi rejected such a plan but, after her death, military planners revived the idea during the "Exercise Brass-tacks" military crisis in the winter of

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<sup>‡‡</sup> The terrorist incident in Mumbai on 26 November 2008 which Indian officials allege involved the Pakistani-based militant group Lashkar Tayyaba (also functions as Jamaat-ut-dawa), is precisely the type of incident that the Indian strategy is intended to respond to. The Pakistan-based group denies involvement but allegedly was involved in many incidents in the past – including the 2001-02 attacks on the Indian Parliament -- which led to the subsequent 10-month military stand-off between the two countries. The full consequences of the 2008 Mumbai incident remain uncertain at the time of this writing.

1986-87.<sup>20</sup> Pakistan continues to be concerned about the possibility of such attacks. In May 1998, for example, when it was preparing to respond to India's nuclear tests, Pakistan received "credible reports" that India was contemplating striking Pakistani nuclear test sites.<sup>21</sup> India's growing partnership with the US and Israel in more recent years has increased such concerns, but these worries are far from central in Pakistan's military planning.

Pakistani leaders believe strongly that nuclear weapons, aided by the intervention of the international community, have deterred India from repeating the 1971 military incursion. Since the development of Pakistan's nuclear capability, there have been five major military crises in the region that had the potential to escalate, but each crisis was eventually terminated without military conflict; this makes the case, in the minds of Pakistan's leaders, that nuclear deterrence works.<sup>22</sup> The region remains unstable, however, and often on the brink of crises, which simultaneously raises the risk that deterrence may one day fail.

Although India remains Pakistan's primary security threat a decade after Pakistan demonstrated its nuclear capacity, new threats also are emerging in the region. Since September 11, 2001, Pakistan's primary military commitment has been to counter-terrorism and counter-insurgency along its Western borders and neighboring areas within the country. In addition to confronting India, Pakistan's military must now defeat the expanding internal threats of violent extremism and terrorism. Pakistan's western borderlands were never stable, nor were relations with Afghanistan. New security threats have been created by internal conflict and instability in Afghanistan over the past three decades. Currently, there is conflict with the Taliban and al-Qaeda forces, which have penetrated Pakistan's tribal areas and expanded the insurgency in Pakistan's western provinces. Extremist threats and suicide bombers are not deterred by nuclear weapons and require a qualitatively different security response.<sup>23</sup>

For a poor country like Pakistan, balancing its military resources between multiple contingencies is extremely challenging. As Pakistan's conventional forces are reoriented against the internal insurgent and terrorist threats, nuclear deterrence gains strength in the minds of Pakistani leaders and planners as the most reliable factor to defend against India. Pakistani leaders believe Indian threats are real and justify nuclear weapons in a region in which strategic stability is far from assured.

In addition, neighboring Iran's quest for nuclear capabilities has created another potential reason for Pakistan to value its nuclear weapons. Although Iran and Pakistan have good relations currently and no direct problems, if and when Iran acquires a nuclear weapons capability, Pakistan could become concerned that it is

being squeezed between India and Iran. The Iranian threat is only hypothetical at present, but Pakistan's reactions to an Iranian nuclear capability could be strong, especially if Iran and Afghanistan became part of India's strategic network against Pakistan.<sup>24</sup>

Pakistan has declared that its nuclear weapons are intended to deter aggression, both conventional and nuclear. By implication, its nuclear weapons are last-resort weapons and will be considered as war-fighting weapons only if physical threats to the country's security are manifested. However, given that the region is full of active conflicts in which future limited wars cannot be ruled out, Pakistani leaders also believe that nuclear weapons have to be configured for war-fighting roles if only to retain their deterrent value. Pakistan therefore has developed and deploys nuclear forces separate from its conventional forces, but has integrated war plans which include targeting policies for conventional and nuclear weapons and a national command authority to make decisions on nuclear use. Unlike India, Pakistan does not have an officially declared nuclear doctrine. Instead, Pakistan has made public its command and control organization (Strategic Plans Division) and elaborated on the professional manner in which it would function.<sup>25</sup> Pakistan does not have an affirmative policy of nuclear first-use, but retains a nuclear use policy option, leaving it to potential aggressors to calculate the risk of the option's implementation.

The final elements in Pakistan's security assessment are evolving relationships among India, Pakistan, Russia, and the United States. The US and Pakistan have been strategic partners and allies for nearly 60 years, but there is growing mistrust between the two states. Reports of US forces directly striking alleged al-Qaeda targets in Pakistani tribal regions has created unprecedented tension.<sup>§§</sup> Moreover, there have been reports in the media alluding to US plans to physically take out Pakistan's nuclear arsenal in some contingencies.<sup>26</sup> The United States has tried many tools to dissuade Pakistan, first, from going nuclear, then pressuring it to give up its weapons, and finally trying unsuccessfully to persuade Pakistan not to join in an arms race with India.<sup>27</sup> Lately, an old idea has been re-floated to buy off the Pakistani nuclear program in return for economic and conventional military aid.<sup>\*\*\*</sup> These developments have profoundly increased security concerns in Pakistan.

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§§ US forces carried out their first attacks on Pakistani territory on 3 September 2008. This and subsequent attacks created a widespread popular uproar, just when Pakistan's new democratic government was finding its feet. Tension in the tribal border is mounting as strikes by unmanned "Predator" drones continue in the area and the public outcry is building a wave of anti-US sentiment.

\*\*\* In the mid-1970s, Henry Kissinger offered similar ideas and, again, in May 1998, Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, made a failed attempt to convince Pakistan not to respond to India's nuclear tests in return for economic and military rewards. Bret Stephens, "Lets Buy Pakistan's Nukes," *Wall Street Journal* (December 16, 2008), [http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122939093016909205.html?mod=googlenews\\_ws](http://online.wsj.com/article/SB122939093016909205.html?mod=googlenews_ws); Brig-Gen Feroz Khan

The past 20 years marked the end of strategic competition between the Soviet Union and the United States. The global security landscape, however, was transformed with unresolved regional conflicts and security competitions. Developing countries, such as Pakistan, that lost their great power alliances when the Cold War ended were now exposed to powerful regional neighbors with whom there had been a history of wars and crises. Under such circumstances, the rationale for a nuclear deterrent became even more relevant for Pakistan. As far as the major nuclear weapon states were concerned, regional security diminished in value, but the proliferation of nuclear weapons per se was recognized as the principal threat to international security. The United States followed a policy of seeking to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons in war-prone countries in order to prevent wars between nuclear weapons-capable countries. This was especially true for South Asia where long-standing conflicts had been shaped into active hostility. Moreover, US policy shifted from initial aversion to any spread of nuclear weapons technology to a policy of selective proliferation—identifying “good” proliferators and “bad” proliferators. For the United States, Israel and India became acceptable proliferators in the Middle East and South Asia, respectively, fueling a sense of discrimination among other nations in both regions.

From Pakistan’s perspective, the US-India nuclear deal is the most important example of nuclear weapons discrimination. The foremost implication is that India has been accepted as a *de facto* nuclear weapon state without accepting the constraints of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). India is the only state that enjoys the benefit of having no legal obligations under the NPT and yet has been given carte blanche authority to produce nuclear weapons from indigenous sources. The most significant aspect of the nuclear deal is that it confers legitimacy to a state that has defied the regime intended to control nuclear proliferation. It rewards the defiant, whereas virtually all other developing states were held to account. The behavior of the international community, and the United States in particular, in the run-up to the Nuclear Suppliers Group’s (NSG) decision to grant a waiver to India, making the US-India deal possible, is a telling illustration that world leaders were not serious about wanting to eliminate nuclear weapons at the time.

The NSG is a supplier’s cartel, created outside the folds of the NPT treaty, ironically in reaction to India’s 1974 nuclear test. By granting the waiver to India, the cartel has presented itself as a promoter of nuclear trade with an outlier to the NPT regime.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, during the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) meetings held to get the India-specific waiver endorsed, the United States coerced

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(ret.) and Christopher Clary, “Dissuasion and Regional Allies: The Case of Pakistan,” in *Strategic Insights* (October 2004), <http://www.ccc.nps.navy.mil/si/2004/oct/khanOct04.asp>.

states that had simple objections to the draft waiver. Western countries such as New Zealand, the Netherlands, Norway, and Austria, who simply wanted stronger assurances that India would not conduct additional nuclear tests, were forced by US pressure to back down. The US also pressured Pakistan to back away after the Pakistani delegate raised some objections.<sup>29</sup> The deal shows clearly that political and economic expediencies can trump non-proliferation concerns. Criticizing the NSG waiver for India, Daryl Kimball, director of the US Arms Control Association commented, “The decision is a non-proliferation disaster of historic proportions that will produce harm for decades to come.”<sup>30</sup>

## REGIONAL AMBITIONS

The most common notion regarding Pakistan’s regional ambitions are that it seeks to control Afghanistan for the strategic depth it would provide vis-à-vis any conflict with India. This concept is no longer relevant in the Pakistani security calculus, however, especially after the events of September 11, 2001. Pakistan does not seek Afghanistan’s geographic space for any strategic purpose. The Pakistani security concern is to ensure that Afghanistan is not used by hostile powers for mischievous purposes against Pakistan’s volatile Western borders. One reason for the bitter history of Afghanistan-Pakistan relations is that Afghanistan, or individuals or groups within it, have at various times acted on behalf of other powers, notably the Soviet Union, India, and Iran, against Pakistan’s interests.

At this point in its history, Pakistan’s regional ambitions are limited to its own defense and national survival. It has no ambitions to aggrandize its position in Asia or in the Islamic world, and does not view its nuclear capabilities as supporting such goals, either now or in the future. Pakistan is affected, however, by the ambitions of others, primarily because of its geographical position and strategic environment. Instability in Afghanistan and the Afghan government’s continuous antagonistic attitude towards Pakistan has caused Pakistani security officials to believe that India is pursuing an encirclement strategy against Pakistan through Afghanistan and Central Asia.<sup>†††</sup> In response, Pakistan believes it has to secure its regional interests through internal and external balancing, which includes restructuring its conventional forces to meet threats from Afghanistan, as well as from India, and to look for strategic partners who share Pakistan’s security concerns. China is one country that has had a special relationship with Pakistan since the early 1960s.

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<sup>†††</sup> Among the Afghan government’s hostile acts toward Pakistan are revanchist territorial claims, abetting tribal insurgents in Pakistan western provinces, and accusing Pakistan of supporting the Taliban. Pakistan sees an Indian hand behind much of this and notes also that India is developing a military base called “Ayni” in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Henry D Sokolski, ed., *Pakistan’s Nuclear Future: Worries Beyond War* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Army War College, January 2008), page 3; also see Stephen Blank, “Russia- Indian Row Over Tajik base Suggests Moscow Caught in Diplomatic Vicious Cycle,” *Eurasia Insight* (January 11, 2008), [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav011108f\\_pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insight/articles/eav011108f_pr.shtml).

China understands and sympathizes with Pakistani security concerns, particularly as it, too, is sometimes concerned about the possibility of conflict with India, but it does not necessarily agree with Pakistani responses to its security predicaments.<sup>+++</sup>

Nuclear weapons have limited influence in this regional context. Except for preventing war with India, they do not play any role in redressing other instabilities. To this extent, Pakistan is satisfied that its prime requirement of deterring India from war is served by its nuclear capability. Pakistan has neither desired to provide, nor received request for, the extension of its nuclear umbrella to any of its neighbors or allies in the Persian Gulf or elsewhere in the Middle East. India's smaller neighbors – Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh – may look to Pakistan to stem India's hegemonic ambitions, but these countries have not sought nuclear guarantees or even explicit security assurances—it would be unrealistic to do so.<sup>31</sup> For the smaller nations of South Asia, stability in Pakistan and its economic progress are more important than Pakistan's nuclear capabilities. An end to the India-Pakistan rivalry will increase the prospects for regional cooperation and, in turn, provide greater benefits to people of all South Asian nations.

## GLOBAL AMBITIONS

Pakistan has never expressed global ambitions in any official or unofficial pronouncement. Pakistan has never perceived itself as anything than a smaller neighbor of India. The notion that nuclear weapons might enhance Pakistan's prestige and influence in the world has no particular attraction, except as a rhetorical device to address a particular domestic audience.

The late Zulfikar Ali Bhutto founded the Pakistani bomb lobby in the early 1960s when he was foreign minister in President Ayub's Cabinet (1963-66). He incubated the idea in Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was supported enthusiastically by some bureaucrats, such as Foreign Secretary Aziz Ahmad and Mr. Agha Shahi, among others.<sup>§§§</sup> Under Bhutto's stewardship from 1963 until 1966, Pakistan's Foreign Office adopted a proactive foreign policy of building a close partnership with China, thereby upping the ante in Kashmir and laying foundations for broadening alliance relationships with countries other than the United States and Europe. At the time, this nuclear lobby promoted an exaggerated image of Pakistan as a bigger player in the region and in Asia more broadly – possibly to attract China as a strategic partner – but, in reality, the primary factor

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<sup>+++</sup> One such public example was that China did not support Pakistan's position in the 1999 Kargil Conflict. On other issues, China does not publicly chastise Pakistan for upping the ante but advises privately that it is unable to deliver what Pakistan might expect.

<sup>§§§</sup> Author's interview with Mr Agha Shahi on 19 June 2005 in Islamabad. Pakistan does not have a practice of declassifying documents for public research, hence it is difficult to substantiate if Bhutto intended a nuclear capability for anything other than to counter the Indian threat.

motivating the push for nuclear weapons was India's growing conventional capabilities and nuclear ambitions. By early 1965, when India was reacting to China's nuclear test in 1964 with a program of its own, President Ayub nevertheless continued to reject the bomb option.

When Z.A. Bhutto became president (and then prime minister) from 1971-77, he not only initiated Pakistan's nuclear program, but also reoriented Pakistan's foreign policy toward the Muslim states in the Middle East. Bhutto saw himself in the mold of such revolutionary third world leaders as Egypt's Nasser, Yugoslavia's Tito, and Algeria's Ben Bella.<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> It was Bhutto's ambition to provide leadership on Islamic causes and the pragmatic necessity of attracting support from oil-rich Arab states which led Bhutto to hold a Summit of the Organization of Islamic countries in Lahore at the peak of the world oil crisis in 1974. Bhutto cleverly embroidered the Pakistani nuclear program with an Islamic identity and attracted support from Saudi Arabia and Libya, in particular.<sup>††††</sup> Bhutto boasted that he would make Pakistan the first Muslim nuclear power, rhetoric that resonated both domestically and among oil-rich Muslim countries. Bhutto had hoped the Middle Eastern states would consider the Pakistani nuclear program as contributing to the collective prestige of Islamic Ummah, and to treat the India nuclear test of 1974 as a threat to all Muslim countries, not just Pakistan. From his death cell in 1979, Z.A. Bhutto wrote how an "imperial conspiracy" was responsible for his ouster from power, because he championed the cause of the "Islamic Civilization bomb."<sup>††††</sup>

Subsequent Pakistani leaders downplayed any notion that Pakistan sought even to become a nuclear power, much less an Islamic nuclear power. Bhutto's successor, President Zia-ul-Haq, kept a low profile with regards to the Pakistani nuclear program, particularly because of the threat of US sanctions and, after the Soviet

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<sup>\*\*\*\*</sup> Author's interview with Mr Tanvir Ahmad Khan on 19 June 2006. When Zulfikar Ali Bhutto came to power, he shifted the focus of Pakistani foreign policy away from New Delhi and toward the Middle East. This brought him into contact with Muammar Gaddafi and other Middle Eastern leaders. Given his nuclear ambitions, Bhutto could easily impress Middle Eastern leaders and extract financial aid from them. Gaddafi apparently offered to buy uranium ore from Niger for Pakistan, but Bhutto never allowed any note-takers in meetings where he discussed sensitive issues like this one. See Wyn Q. Bowen, *Libya's Nuclear Program: Stepping Back from the Brink*, Adelphi Paper 380 (London: Institute of Strategic Studies, 2006), pages 30-31.

<sup>††††</sup> Bhutto courted Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi particularly. He renamed the Lahore cricket stadium as Qaddafi Stadium, for example, pleasing the Libyan leader and gaining both financial support and uranium yellow cake resources for Pakistan in return. Author's interview with Tanvir Ahmad Khan on 19 June 2006. See also Wyn Q. Bowen, *Libya and Nuclear Proliferation: Stepping Back from the Brink*, Adelphi Paper 380 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2006), pages 30-31.

<sup>††††</sup> Bhutto famously wrote, "The Christian, Jewish and Hindu Civilizations have this capability. The Communist powers also possess it. Only the Islamic Civilization was without it, but that position was about to change." Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, *If I am Assassinated...* (New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1979), page 137; Steve Weissman and Herbert Kroesney, *The Islamic Bomb* (New Delhi: Vision Books, 1983), page 9; Ashok Kapur, *Pakistan's Nuclear Development* (New York: Croom Helm, 1987), page 56.

invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, so as not to jeopardize the renewal of close US–Pakistan relations. Zia, though Islamist himself, never countenanced Bhutto’s notion of the Islamic bomb. Zia felt that such a posture would increase the challenge from anti-nuclear forces in the US and Europe and make Pakistan’s nuclear program even more controversial. He maintained a strict public posture of denying nuclear weapon ambitions. This stance more or less remained Pakistan’s position until May 1998, when Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in response to India’s. As Pakistan’s permanent representative to the Conference on Disarmament stated on 2 June 1998,

Pakistan is not interested in an arms race with India nor is Pakistan seeking the status of a nuclear weapon state. Our tests were defense oriented and meant to restore strategic balance in the region. We will adjust ourselves in the best interest of Pakistan, as developments in various related areas take place.<sup>32</sup>

However, Pakistan’s efforts to acquire a latent nuclear capability in the 1970s changed dramatically into a full weapons program after the 1974 India test, which alerted the world to the prospects of nuclear proliferation in South Asia. The US anticipated Pakistani reaction to the Indian test, and pressured Western supplier countries not to deliver contracted nuclear supplies to Pakistan, tightened the nascent nuclear suppliers regime, and, by 1977, passed domestic legislation (Glenn and Symington Amendments to existing US non-proliferation laws) to prevent further proliferation. The United States attempted to persuade Pakistan not to respond to the 1974 India test by promising to bolster its conventional force capabilities, but Pakistan’s security predicament was far too great to be persuaded. Instead, Pakistan switched from a bomb design based on plutonium to one based on highly enriched uranium, something the Western countries doubted that a technologically backward state like Pakistan could successfully manage.<sup>33</sup>

It was under these circumstances that Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, a metallurgist then working at the URENCO uranium enrichment facility in Holland, offered his services. Motivated to help his home nation, Dr. Khan greatly enhanced Pakistan’s efforts to produce highly enriched uranium through a gas centrifuge process, which at the time was a secondary track to national nuclear acquisitions, the primary track being based on plutonium separation: India, Israel, and South Africa, for example, had all acquired nuclear weapons through plutonium separation. With knowledge obtained during his service at URENCO, AQ Khan reorganized Pakistan’s fledgling centrifuge program and developed a procurement network in Europe, where willing suppliers were prepared to circumvent laws and help fill those industrial voids that Pakistan’s indigenous capacities could not achieve. The 1970s and 1980s saw a race between the establishment of obstacles to prevent technology transfers and the

efforts of AQ Khan's network to stay ahead of the curve. Illicit nuclear trafficking and trade in nuclear-related expertise and technologies thrived, not only due to illegal practices, but also by exploiting loopholes in national export control regulations, often with the complicity of willing officials in supplier countries. Dr. AQ Khan had considerable knowledge of this underworld. He established an independent network to help Pakistan procure what it could not get through transparent means. Several countries involved in proliferation were either not party to the global non-proliferation regime or maintained covert state-to-state cooperative activities. There were also private entities doing business in dual-use technologies, which included state actors as recipients. The now infamous AQ Khan nuclear network was eventually established under such circumstances, where the lucrative nuclear business provided great financial returns to businessmen in Asia, Africa, and Europe willing to ignore the law. As described in a "London Dossier" by the International Institute of Strategic Studies, the Khan network was established with an interconnected set of nodes of suppliers and intermediaries in various countries, often loosely connected. It evolved over time from a state-controlled to a largely private criminal enterprise.<sup>34</sup>

Pakistan clearly benefited from the Khan network and, in fact, it required that the Pakistani nuclear program be characterized by secrecy and compartmentalization. From 1989-99, the Pakistani system of governance was also characterized by a *de facto* power sharing arrangement among the president, the prime minister, and the Army chief, something intrinsic to the Pakistani system of governance even today.<sup>§§§§</sup> The diffusion of power helped the AQ Khan network to turn from importing for the state to exporting to other aspirant nuclear weapon states, functioning nearly autonomously from the Pakistani government with a functioning office in Dubai and nodes elsewhere. Given the national importance of the Pakistan nuclear program and the premium placed on preserving its secrecy, the lack of oversight and autonomy given to AQ Khan was deliberate. It is possible that several government officials, including some senior military officials, were beneficiaries of this business. In February 2000, Pakistan formally announced the establishment of a Nuclear Command Authority (NCA), which tightened controls after the military regime took power in 1999. Subsequent disclosure of the activities of the global network in 2003- 2004 forced Pakistan to further institutionalize and tighten its command and control system with improved organizational best practices and tighter structures for nuclear safety and security.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>§§§§</sup> During the periods 1977-88 (Zia-ul-Haq) and 1999-2007 (Pervez Musharraf), Pakistan was ruled by military regimes with the offices of the president and the Army chief in the same person. This ensured unity of command, on the one hand, but, on the other hand, undermined the growth of democratic governance.

The Pakistan nuclear program suffers from the activities of the AQ Khan network. The latter casts a huge shadow and does not reflect on the real reasons for, and meanings of, Pakistan's nuclear capability. AQ Khan's illicit practices with Libya, Iran, and North Korea have brought few benefits to Pakistan and have, in fact, damaged Pakistan's reputation, made it cause for concern around the world, and undermined the achievements of its other scientific organizations, the role of nuclear weapons in its national security policy, and the progress it has made to tighten command and control and nuclear security and safety.<sup>36</sup>

## NUCLEAR PLANS

Like many nuclear weapon states, Pakistan's actual nuclear plans are shrouded in secrecy. Pakistan's planning parameters envision a deterrent force consisting of a relatively small number of weapons to be delivered by aircraft and liquid- and solid-fueled ballistic missiles.<sup>37</sup>

Generally speaking, Pakistan is satisfied with its progress in developing nuclear capacity. Pakistan has been unwilling, however, to cap its nuclear weapons development and production, as well as the development of more advanced means of delivering those weapons, for several reasons discussed below. Still, as a practical matter, Pakistan's economic situation has been deteriorating rapidly since 2007. Worsening political instability and growth of extremism have stalled Pakistan's impressive economic growth over the previous six years. The economic situation influences Pakistan's nuclear program in the short-term in two ways. First, the financial crunch will slow down the pace at which nuclear weapon development plans are implemented. Second, the rising cost and growing scarcity of oil and gas resources will force Pakistan to try and increase the availability of alternative energy sources, especially nuclear energy.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> In the long run, however, Pakistan can neither ignore India's weapons modernization nor its own energy needs.

India's strategic modernization program includes acquisitions of modern air and naval weapons that can dominate the air space in any conflict and provide options to India for sea-based offensive threats ranging from naval blockades to the destruction of infrastructure along the Pakistani coastline. The Indian army also is being modernized, including the mechanized fighting units that are organized and equipped to fight against Pakistan. India's army modernization has little to do with

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\*\*\*\*\* The Pakistani Planning Commission's energy projections are based on growth over the next 25 years of 163,000 megawatts (MW), of which nuclear energy will provide 8,800 MW. This implies a twenty-fold increase in current capacity, which is around 450 MW, at its optimum. This information is based on background briefing given to the author, along with a visiting team from the US Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey by the director of the General Strategic Plans Division, and Secretary of Pakistan National Command Authority at Joint Services Headquarters, Rawalpindi, Pakistan (June 15, 2006). Also see Pak's vision 2030 project [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\04\09\story\\_9-4-2008\\_pg5\\_1](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\04\09\story_9-4-2008_pg5_1).

potential conflicts with China, as the terrain that borders China would make maneuver warfare nearly impossible.<sup>38</sup> India's stocks of nuclear materials and nuclear weapons are also expected to increase at a faster pace as a result of the previously mentioned US-India agreement and the subsequent exceptions to limitations on trade in fissile materials with nations that have not ratified the NPT granted by the IAEA and NSG. India is also developing more advanced ballistic and cruise missiles that will increase India's strategic reach. Finally, India's space systems and ballistic missile defenses will make Pakistan more vulnerable from stand-off distances. Cumulatively, the offense-defense balance in the region is tilting in favor of the offense and eventually may lead to strategic instabilities.<sup>39</sup>

Pakistan's nuclear plans will be directly affected by changes in India's military capabilities. Pakistan will be under greater pressure to maintain even a minimal deterrent, especially if India pursues an interest in ballistic missile defenses.<sup>40</sup> One of the primary motivators of Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons was what Michael Mandelbaum describes as the "orphan state factor."<sup>41</sup> Unlike many nations in Europe and Japan, states that enjoy security as a result of the nuclear umbrella extended through NATO by the US, Pakistan and Israel have been left to fend for themselves. For most of its nuclear history, Pakistan was treated the same as Israel and India, the other non-NPT nuclear powers. Pakistani security planners now, however, are increasingly conscious of their solitary status, given the US nuclear deal with India and the United States' official acceptance of Israel's nuclear opacity.<sup>42</sup> This apparent loss of US sympathy for Pakistan's security rationale is now magnifying the country's sense of isolation. Pakistan's security anxiety is compounded by the United States' current insistence that the Pakistani armed forces focus on counter-insurgency on the Afghan frontier, even at the expense of preparing to defend against threats it perceives from India. The US has stepped up pressure for Pakistan to "do more" about threats related to the global war on terror and violent extremism. This means that Pakistan must now find a balance between strategic threats from India, which can turn rapidly into operational threats in the event of a military crisis, while simultaneously focusing on countering the expanding insurgency. For all these reasons, Pakistan is being compelled to rely more heavily on nuclear weapons to counter the growing threat it perceives from India.

## **FORCE POSTURES**

Pakistan's fissile material stockpiles are primarily based on highly enriched uranium (HEU) and, secondarily, plutonium. Though estimates vary in public sources, Pakistan has at least 1,500 kilograms (kg) of HEU and about 60 kg of plutonium. Pakistan continues to produce these two categories of fissile materials at Khan Research Laboratories (KRL), the gas centrifuge facility at Kahuta, and at the

Khushab power reactor. The total average annual production capacity is approximately 100 kg HEU and 10 kg plutonium. Pakistan is reportedly constructing another power reactor, Khushab-2, which will have roughly the same capacity (40 - 50 MW). There are also reports of a commercial-scale reprocessing facility under construction at Chashma. Together, these new facilities would at least double Pakistan's plutonium capacity over the next five to ten years.<sup>43</sup> Reports in Western media that Pakistan plutonium capacity will be tripled due to additional power reactors under construction at Khushab were rebutted by Pakistani officials in 2007, but not refuted and no reactions were shown in subsequent reports.<sup>44</sup>

Public estimates of Pakistan's nuclear weapons stockpile vary widely. Based on various sources, at the end of 2008, Pakistan's nuclear stockpile probably consisted of between 80 and 125 weapons, with 100 weapons being the author's best estimate.<sup>45</sup>

Pakistan currently utilizes a combination of aircraft and ballistic missiles for nuclear delivery missions. Two aircraft in Pakistan's inventory, the US-supplied F-16 "Fighting Falcon" multi-role fighter and the French Mirage 5PA are particularly well suited for a nuclear delivery role. At present, Pakistan has about 50 Mirage 5s and 35 1980s-vintage F-16s. However, the United States has agreed to provide mid-life upgrades for Pakistan's existing F-16s and to transfer another 18 aircraft to the Pakistan Air Force.<sup>46</sup>

Pakistan relies primarily, however, on ballistic missiles as its means of delivering nuclear weapons. Today, Pakistan possesses a missile force comprising road and rail mobile solid-fuel missiles (Abdali, Ghaznavi, Shaheen 1 and 2) as its mainstay, and the less accurate liquid-fuel missiles (Ghauri 1 and 2) for long-range strikes against population centers deep inside India. Pakistan is also working on a ground-launched cruise missile called the Babur, which was tested first in August 2005 and again in March 2006. In addition, Pakistan is working to build a sea-based nuclear strike arm, but this is still in the research and development stage. At some point, Pakistan may be able to field a submarine-based cruise missile. Pakistan does not have deep water naval ambitions, but eventually its sea-based deterrent will provide Pakistan an assuredly survivable second-strike capability. Pakistan's eventual force posture will be determined by Indian air force modernization, India's potential deployment of missile defenses, and the modernization of Indian naval platforms. The table below lists the main air and missile delivery systems in Pakistan's inventory.<sup>47</sup>

<b>Aircraft / Missile</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Status</b>
F-16 A/B	925 km	United States	35 planes in inventory
Mirage 5 PA	1300 km	France	50 planes in inventory
Hatf 1	80-100 km	Indigenous	In service since mid-1990s
Hatf 2 (Abdali)	180 km	Indigenous/China	Tested in May 2002, in service
Hatf 3 (Ghaznavi)	300 km	Indigenous/China	M-11, tested May 2002, in service
Hatf 4 (Shaheen 1)	600-800 km	Indigenous /China	First tested October 2002, in service
Hatf 5 (Ghauri 1)	1300-1500 km	Indigenous/DPRK	No Dong, tested May 2002, in service
Hatf 5 (Ghauri 2)	2,000 km	Indigenous/DPRK	No Dong, tested April 2002, in development
Hatf 6 (Shaheen 2)	2,000-2500 km	Indigenous/China	First tested March 2004, in development
Hatf 7 (Babur)	500 km GLCM	Indigenous/China?	First tested August 2005, in development

Pakistan's nuclear targeting policy is obviously not in the public domain. Pakistan maintains deliberate ambiguity about its targeting policy, deployment patterns, and the nature of the warheads on its strategic weapons, making it difficult for its adversaries to distinguish between nuclear-tipped delivery systems and conventional weapon systems. Pakistan's nuclear targeting plans, moreover, are integral to its military operational planning and the balancing of strategic requirements for the multi-directional threats described previously.

The expansion of Pakistan's nuclear forces, their improving accuracy, and the emphasis on diverse means of delivery are intended to ensure that in the event of crisis or conflict, Pakistan could continue to hold Indian cities, defense facilities,

and its military-industrial complex, at risk. Pakistani planners believe these improvements are necessary to maintain the credibility of its deterrent. If a situation ever evolved into an actual nuclear exchange, the numbers and identification of targets would depend on the severity of the war situation and the gravity of the threat posed to Pakistan by India's conventional forces. The trend in Pakistani military modernization is to add a mix of forces capable of counter-value, as well as counter-force, targeting.

To date, Pakistan has not contemplated developing and fielding short-range (tactical) nuclear weapons. However, the nature of the competition in the region would indicate that if India fielded such weapons, Pakistan would match it with a countervailing strategy. According to Agha Shahi, Zulfikar Khan, and Abdul Sattar,

Obviously, deterrence force will have to be upgraded in proportion to the heightened threat of preemption and interception. Augmentation of the quantum and variety of our strategic arsenal is unavoidable...equally important are questions about adequacy of conventional forces. A nuclear response cannot be involved to deal with local contingencies. Given the consequences, the nuclear threshold should be maintained at a high level. Can Pakistan cope with the budgetary burden?<sup>48</sup>

### **THE ROLE OF PAKISTAN'S NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN ITS OVERALL FOREIGN POLICY**

The role of nuclear weapons in a nation's foreign policy and political-military strategy depends on the balance of two competing potential consequences – whether nuclear weapons make the state's leaders feel more secure or more vulnerable. On one level, leaders may gain a sense of invincibility when they possess the ultimate weapon. Will that confidence cause the nation to act in more aggressive ways than it would otherwise? Alternatively, nuclear weapons may make a nation's leaders feel more vulnerable because of international opprobrium or even the threat of preventive strikes by adversaries. If the state is isolated internationally, it not only loses influence but may pay a price for acquiring nuclear capabilities.

Pakistan's nuclear weapons status has not provided any significant leverage for either its foreign policy or its political-military strategy. Nuclear weapons in and of themselves do not provide any advantage unless they are backed up by other elements of national power. Pakistan's weak economic performance, domestic political instabilities, and role in aiding instability in neighboring countries have

created vulnerabilities that far outweigh the potential leverage that might otherwise be associated with its nuclear weapon status.

There are two controversial hypotheses about Pakistan's political and military strategy. The first is whether nuclear weapons emboldened Pakistan to foment insurgencies in Kashmir and Afghanistan. Examination of the regional history reveals that a political–military strategy of supporting insurgencies, followed by military incursions, was adopted by both India and Pakistan well before either acquired nuclear weapons. Pakistan has consistently supported Muslim insurgents in Kashmir since 1948; indeed, the *casus belli* of the 1965 war with India was Pakistan's active efforts to foment the insurgency (Operation Gibraltar), followed by limited military excursions intended to sever Kashmir from India.<sup>49</sup> These events occurred, of course, well before Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons. Six years later, still well before the advent of nuclear capabilities in South Asia, India followed the same strategy in East Pakistan and succeeded in creating Bangladesh.<sup>†††††</sup> India helped fuel the insurgency in East Pakistan for nine months before assailing the country with conventional military forces.<sup>†††††</sup> Although India succeeded where Pakistan failed, both strategies were pursued prior to nuclear weapons entering either country's arsenal.

Nor did the support of each other's dissidents and insurgents come to an end with the advent of nuclear capabilities. It was especially pertinent to the crises in 1999 and 2002 that followed the South Asian nuclear tests. These incidents seem to have occurred as a result of continuing business–as–usual, not the result of nuclear capacity. The unresolved problem in Kashmir will continue to embroil the region in crises and, potentially, wars. Nuclear weapons have only hardened the two sides' positions – they have not caused them to resolve this potential source of disaster.<sup>50</sup>

Pakistan's security is linked symbiotically to Afghanistan, and its support of the Taliban has little or nothing to do with its nuclear weapons capability. As explained earlier, the systemic changes in the region since 9/11 have forced Pakistan to undertake a major strategic reorientation. The blowback of the continuing civil war in Afghanistan on Pakistan's internal situation is aggravating already existing

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<sup>†††††</sup> India permitted establishment of rebel Awami League Headquarters in Calcutta, established a Bangladesh government in exile and "Radio Free Bangladesh," and established training camps for Bangladesh "liberation forces." See: Richard Sisson and Leo Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India and the Creation of Bangladesh* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), pages 142-43.

<sup>†††††</sup> Influential hardliners in India urged the exploitation of the situation in East Pakistan as Bengali refugees poured into India. See K. Subrahmanayam's highly publicized remark published in the *National Herald* on April 5, 1971 to the effect that the East Pakistan crisis presented India "an opportunity the like of which will never come again." Cited in Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington DC: The Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), page 206; Richard Sisson and Leo Rose, *op.cit.*, pages 149-50.

anxieties about nuclear security in Pakistan. In this sense, nuclear weapons have again complicated, not resolved, an issue. The terrorists operating in Pakistan and Afghanistan are clearly not deterred by Pakistan's nuclear weapons.<sup>51</sup>

The most controversial hypothesis about the role of nuclear weapons in Pakistan's foreign policy concerns its relationship with China and the alleged Pan-Islamic implications.

The special character of relations between Pakistan and China has been a subject of curiosity for nearly five decades, since the India-China crisis began in 1959 and subsequent war in 1962.<sup>52</sup> The basis of Pakistan-China entente is strategic logic—a realistic power calculation based on their respective potential conflicts with India and interest in the strategic balance of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.<sup>53</sup> Pakistan's strategic location—not just as a rival neighbor to India, but as neighbor to China's volatile Xinjiang province—is of intrinsic interest to China. Pakistan also offers potential trade and energy corridors, as well as important political conduits to China's interests in the Middle East and the Muslim world.<sup>§§§§§</sup> This special relationship is not without concerns, however, especially with regard to issues of terrorism and China's sensitivity about Islamist separatism in Xinjiang. In recent years, China has disengaged somewhat from the India-Pakistan conflict and sought rapprochement with India, causing anxieties in Pakistan, but overall the relationship remains vital and strong. China realizes that India possesses far greater military strength than Pakistan, and has never considered a formal strategic alliance with Pakistan against India or any other country. It strives simply to keep "Pakistan strong and confident enough to remain independent of Indian domination and willing to challenge Indian moves in the South Asian region."<sup>54</sup> For Pakistan, its alliance with the United States, though critical for both nations, is adversely affected by growing distrust and could potentially break down. In 1990, in fact, it broke down over nuclear issues and, with a growing US-India partnership, China is the only major power ally on whom Pakistan can rely.

It is within this context that nuclear cooperation between Pakistan and China began, and it has been a closely kept secret in both countries.<sup>55</sup> It is, however, widely understood that China assisted Pakistan in gaining critical military technologies in significant ways, which included helping overcome technical denials and sanctions by Western nations.<sup>56</sup> The most oft cited Chinese support to Pakistan has been on missile systems and the development of nuclear weapons.<sup>57</sup> In 1982, the first reports appeared about China helping Pakistan overcome technical difficulties at the

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<sup>§§§§§</sup> China is helping with massive developments projects in Pakistan and is constructing Gwadar Port in Western Baluchistan as a key transit point for Central Asian energy supplies. This port provides Pakistan a second seaport 450 kilometers away from Karachi, providing some strategic depth to Pakistan's Navy.

uranium enrichment plant.<sup>58</sup> The *Financial Times* reported in 1984 about China's provision of a nuclear weapon design of a type that had been successfully tested as China's fourth nuclear test in 1966.<sup>59</sup> In June 1994, further controversy arose when it was reported that China's Nuclear Energy Industry Corporation (CNEIC) had sold 5000 ring magnets to Khan Research Laboratories, putting China's assistance under a spotlight.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> Another report suggested China had provided uranium hexafluoride to Pakistan before the latter had gained the capability to produce its own.<sup>60</sup> China came under US pressure as a result of these reports and that same year ceased to provide both nuclear and missile support to Pakistan.<sup>61</sup> China also came to Pakistan's rescue in the late 1980s when Pakistan worried about the Indian Integrated Guided Missile Development Program that had commenced in 1983.<sup>62</sup> The Chinese assisted Pakistan in launching two short-range ballistic missiles—Hatf-1 (80 km) and Hatf-II (150–180 km). Later, Pakistan acquired M-11s from China – a solid fuel missile with a 290 kilometer range. China helped establish a missile manufacturing plant as well as training personnel, which enabled Pakistan to field longer range (600- 800) solid fuel missiles (purportedly derived from the Chinese M-9 missile) and, more importantly, helped establish an indigenous base for solid fuel technologies. It was only in November 1994 that China agreed with the United States to abide by the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) and promised to halt this assistance.<sup>63</sup> US analysts and intelligence reports, however, allege that Pakistan and China continued missile technology cooperation until the early 2000s.<sup>64</sup>

A nuclear-armed Pakistan is relatively more confident to stand up to hegemonic pressures and, because of that, China saw logic in balancing India by supporting Pakistan. China does not encourage Pakistan, however, to proactively challenge India, either through asymmetric means or by upping the ante in a direct confrontation. Nuclear proliferation, crises, violent extremism, and terrorism emanating from in and around Pakistan are sources of concern and China has actively cautioned Pakistan and sought Pakistani cooperation to control these dangers, both bilaterally and through its membership in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization.

As regards the alleged Pan-Islamic role, Pakistan has consistently denied that its nuclear program reflects any aspirations to lead a broad Islamic coalition, insisting instead that the program is focused strictly on its South Asian security challenges.<sup>65</sup> Saudi Arabia is cited most often as a potential beneficiary of Pakistan's nuclear capability.<sup>66</sup> Western sources have alleged a secret deal between Pakistan and Saudi

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\*\*\*\*\* Ring magnets are used to stabilize and balance the cascading centrifuges spinning at extraordinarily high speeds. See *London Dossier, op.cit.*, page 26.

Arabia, supposedly a quid pro quo for Saudi financial support; these allegations remain unsubstantiated.<sup>†††††</sup> Both Libya and Saudi Arabia have contributed to Pakistan's nuclear program in some way.<sup>67</sup> As noted, Libya provided financial assistance and uranium from Niger in the 1970s.<sup>68</sup> But AQ Khan's assistance to Libya's nuclear program in the 1990s and later was not connected to Libyan cooperation in the 1970s. Relations between Pakistan and Libya went cold after ZA Bhutto was hanged and never returned to the same level again.<sup>69</sup> Libya contacted the Khan network in 1997, when there were no ideological or military connections between the two governments.<sup>70</sup>

At least one religious scholar and current Senator, Khurshid Ahmad, who belongs to a major religious party, Jama'at-e-Islami, is reported to have expressed the view that Pakistan's nuclear weapons have a role beyond deterring India. He stated that,

Pakistan as an Islamic state has a responsibility to the broader Umma...Pakistan's nuclear weapons will inevitably be seen as a threat by Israel, and therefore Pakistan must include Israel in its defense planning. Under the circumstances, the future of the Muslim world depends on Pakistan.<sup>71</sup>

It is unclear if the contention of Senator Ahmad is intended to provide extended deterrence to Muslim countries or if he has some other objective in mind. To date, however, there have been no official public statements, serious policy planning, or military strategies adopted in Pakistan that includes consideration of influence in other nations resulting from its nuclear weapons, whether through extension of a "nuclear umbrella" or help with their nuclear weapon programs. There is, of course, the popular rhetoric and pride that has resulted from Pakistan becoming the first Muslim country to acquire nuclear weapons, and this resonates strongly within the domestic political culture.

The instabilities in South Asia make Pakistan's nuclear program a cause of worry for the international community. Except for possibly contributing to the avoidance of a new war between Pakistan and India, nuclear weapons have brought little benefit to South Asia. There is close to a consensus in Pakistan in support of the concept that nuclear weapons provide the ultimate insurance for a nation's security. It is, however, unclear how nuclear weapons in Pakistan might affect NATO forces operating in Afghanistan on Pakistan's western borders or Indian forces exercising

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<sup>†††††</sup> Saudi Arabia has contributed financially during critical periods of Pakistani economic downturns, particularly at times when Pakistan was being sanctioned by the United States and other nations for its nuclear developments. In 1999, a visit by the Saudi Defense Minister to the AQ Khan Research Laboratories reinforced such allegations. See: Bruno Tertrais, "Khan's Nuclear Exports: Was there a State Strategy?" in Henry D Sokolski, *op. cit.*, pages 26-27.

on its eastern borders.<sup>72</sup> These factors, along with complications caused by recent US military activity inside Pakistani borders, call into question the continuing capability of Pakistan's nuclear weapons to succeed in their role as a deterrent of outside threats.

### **PAKISTANI VIEWS ON PROLIFERATION, ARMS CONTROL, AND DISARMAMENT**

Nuclear proliferation has never been in Pakistan's interest. Even though diffusion of nuclear technology helped Pakistan to acquire its nuclear weapons capability, it gained little as a result in terms of its international position. Pakistan was better off in the 1960s, before it acquired nuclear weapons, in all aspects of national life—political, economic, and in the relative capabilities of its conventional armed forces. The military regime of Ayub Khan in the early 1960s was a leading proponent of disarmament and global non-proliferation. In an address to the United Nations General Assembly in 1962, President Ayub Khan outlined Pakistan's preference stating:

An aspect of disarmament which is of deep concern to Pakistan is the clear and present danger of the spread of nuclear weapons and the knowledge of their technology to States which do not now possess them...This imminent peril demands that the General Assembly give urgent consideration to the conclusion of a treaty to outlaw the further spread of nuclear weapons and the knowledge of their manufacture, whether by acquisition from the present nuclear powers or by any other means.<sup>73</sup>

For Pakistan, the primary cost of acquiring nuclear capabilities has been the deterioration of its relations with the United States. Pakistan complained of India's nuclear ambitions to its Western allies in the 1960s, but to no avail. When India declined to join the Non-Proliferation Treaty, it became impossible for Pakistan to become a member, even if it had wanted to. Nor was India the only hold-out; Pakistan and India were joined by Argentina, Brazil, Israel, and South Africa in opposing the Treaty, to name a few. Pakistan acquired its nuclear capabilities in a global proliferation environment. Most of the other hold-outs have since renounced a weapons capability, but only after major systemic shifts occurred domestically or in their regional security situations.

These days, Pakistan's official position of concern about nuclear proliferation, no matter how sincerely expressed by Pakistani officials, lacks credibility in the eyes of the international community. Pakistan's record of acquiring nuclear weapon technologies and materials from the grey market and then allowing this technology

to slip out of the country to others is a scarlet letter that Pakistan has been unable to overcome. It is the direct result of the AQ Khan network. In an effort to counter this opprobrium, Pakistan has undertaken extraordinary efforts to shut down the network, reorganize its command of the nuclear security regime, and pass stringent export control legislation. Pakistan also has sought help from the US and other Western countries to modernize its nuclear management capabilities. The general perception of Pakistan's role in nuclear proliferation, however, is still dominated by the legacy of the AQ Khan network.<sup>74</sup>

Pakistan's position on nuclear arms control and disarmament has been proactive and supportive from the beginning. Based on this author's interviews with Pakistani officials who served in the 1960s under President Ayub Khan, the military and civil bureaucracy believed firmly that preserving the alliance with the United States was critical for balancing a weak Pakistan against a stronger India. Under Ayub Khan's leadership, the scientific community did not want to jeopardize its reach by exceeding acceptable limits, either in terms of its knowledge base or its nuclear energy building capacity. Similarly, the bureaucracy, as well as the military, were benefiting from Western military technologies and aid and concessions from the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Consequently, Ayub rejected the rhetorical and political push by the bomb lobby as a matter of deliberate policy.<sup>75</sup>

Since the mid-1970s, even after Pakistan embarked on a nuclear weapons program and especially after the 1974 Indian nuclear test, Pakistan has proposed regional arms control and disarmament agreements that would directly complement global disarmament objectives and conform to the letter and spirit of Article VI of the NPT. It is difficult to classify the real from the rhetoric in a nation's diplomatic position, especially when proposed in formal plenary sessions of the United Nations' Committee on Disarmament or General Assembly; all nations engage in rhetorical excess on these occasions. But bilateral papers exchanged for purposes of negotiations can be considered serious endeavors by a state. Pakistan's actual position, as expressed in these papers, has been to seek to arrest nuclear proliferation in South Asia—both to be on the right side of the international community and to avoid a strategic arms race with India. It makes logical sense that Pakistan would want to avoid an arms race with India—economically it cannot afford such an endeavor and, in proposing not to do so, gains the favor of the international community.

The initiatives taken by Pakistan to arrest nuclear proliferation in South Asia are a matter of historical record. After India's 1974 nuclear test, Pakistan proposed a joint Indo-Pakistan declaration renouncing the acquisition or manufacture of nuclear weapons. In 1978, Pakistan proposed mutual inspections by India and Pakistan of

each other's nuclear facilities. In 1979, Pakistan proposed simultaneous adherence to the NPT by India and Pakistan. Also that year, Pakistan proposed simultaneous acceptance of full-scope IAEA safeguards by the two rivals. In 1987, it proposed a bilateral or regional nuclear test-ban treaty. And, finally, in 1994, it proposed a South Asia Zero-Missile Zone.<sup>76</sup>

In addition to these specific initiatives, Pakistan has suggested various modalities for negotiations, including bilateral talks with India, 5-nation regional talks, and even multilateral conferences to support initiatives suggested by the United States in the early 1990s. For example, the US has offered 5-nation talks and, later, 9-nation consultations on nonproliferation in South Asia and Pakistan agreed to participate. Pakistan continued faithfully to negotiate the CTBT until 1996, when India made clear it would not participate in the treaty. Depending upon one's position, these Pakistani initiatives could either be considered rhetorical, as Pakistan could assume that they inevitably would be rejected by India; or be viewed as genuine, as Pakistan could sincerely hope the proposals would lead the international community to pay greater attention to the situation in South Asia and the threats posed by India. More importantly, Pakistan hoped through these efforts to mitigate or undo the series of nuclear sanctions it had been subjected to, as they were having detrimental effects domestically. In the wake of the 1998 nuclear tests and intense US diplomacy, a mutual restraint agreement between India and Pakistan was designed to stabilize proliferation in the region and to insulate South Asian proliferation from the rest of the world. The first such initiative was proposed on 2 June 1998 when the UN contemplated nuclear sanctions against India and Pakistan. This was followed up in several United Nations forums, seeking to balance conventional arms control and nuclear arms control in the region, enabling India and Pakistan to resist engaging in an intensified arms race. During bilateral negotiations, Pakistan formally presented a "Strategic Restraint Regime for South Asia" to the United States and India, separately.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> The model presented in that paper showed how to contain nuclear capabilities at an acceptable level, as well as to prevent vertical proliferation.

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<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> This author was primarily responsible for conceiving the Strategic Restraint Regime proposal in 1998 which was a non-paper proposal submitted by Pakistan during the strategic dialogue with the United States (Strobe Talbott and Robert J Einhorn) in July-September 1998 and subsequently the same concept was put forward to India on 16 October 1998 (Foreign Secretary level Composite Dialogue on Peace, Security and Confidence Building Measures). The peace process culminated in a summit between the prime ministers of India and Pakistan in Lahore on 20-21 February 1999 which ended with a Lahore Declaration. One part of the peace security and CBM was the Lahore Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) of 21 February 1999. The Lahore MOU is the founding document based on which India and Pakistan were to bilaterally negotiate and consult on security concepts, nuclear doctrine, and confidence building measures in the nuclear and conventional weapons fields. India and Pakistan were to undertake national measures to reduce the risks of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons; abide by their respective unilateral moratoriums on conducting further nuclear test explosions; review the implementation of existing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs); review the existing communication links; engage in bilateral consultations on security, disarmament and non-proliferation issues; and work on technical details at the expert level. Text of the Lahore Declaration and Lahore MOU is available at <http://www.stimson.org/southasia/?sn=sa20020109215>, last accessed March 12, 2009.

Unfortunately, India rejected the proposal. To India, the Pakistani proposal would have limited it to a regional context, which would have undermined India's goal to emerge as a global power.

Pakistan is aware that energy needs are growing among the industrialized countries in Asia and that there will be growing demand for peaceful uses of nuclear energy. From a proliferation standpoint, when any country develops its own nuclear energy capability, there is always a latent risk that such technologies and materials could be applied to develop weapons. In anticipation of this possibility, Pakistan put forward a proposal at an IAEA conference which would establish "nuclear energy parks," a direct effort to alleviate proliferation stemming from civilian nuclear programs.<sup>77</sup>

Pakistan's primary proliferation concern, however, is the growth of Indian and Pakistani nuclear arsenals, resulting indirectly from the cascading effect of competition between India and China. That competition will likely directly affect Pakistan or, at least, change the dynamics of the balance of power in the region. None of the non-nuclear-weapon countries in South Asia or Central Asia have nuclear ambitions, except Iran. However, Pakistan's secondary proliferation concern is that if peaceful uses of nuclear energy become more wide-spread, the proliferation of nuclear materials in a region where borders are insecure, local wars of secession are not rare, and violent ideological extremism is the norm, would be dangerous in terms of the possibility of seizures by extremists.

Pakistan's third proliferation concern stems from the prospect of a nuclear-armed Iran. While Iran poses no direct threat to Pakistan, the relationship between the two countries could deteriorate for three main reasons. First, Sunni fundamentalism in Pakistan has been influenced by Pakistan's close relationship with its Arab neighbors, particularly Saudi Arabia. A nuclear Iran would almost certainly be more assertive in encouraging its preferred strain of Islam within the Shia population of neighboring countries. Especially given the recent shift in its leadership, Pakistan does not want to see greater sectarian divisiveness in the region. Second, Iran and Pakistan compete for influence in Afghanistan. In the 1990s, Iran supported the Northern Alliance against the Pakistan- and Saudi-backed Taliban. The continuing conflict in that country could cause problems again between Iran and Pakistan. Third, India has courted Iran in recent years. If Iran and India were to work in concert against Pakistan, it would have huge implications for Pakistan's security situation, posing a second-front threat.

In general, given recent history and the Khan network, nuclear proliferation anywhere in the world evokes fear in Islamabad of allegations against Pakistan. Nuclear ambitions that emerge anywhere in the Islamic world will make Pakistan a

suspect by default, until proven otherwise. For this reason alone, Pakistan looks nervously upon the risk of additional proliferation or any nuclear smuggling incident. The porous borders in Central and South Asia add another layer to proliferation anxieties. Trafficking of all sorts is widely acknowledged in this area and any incident rings alarms in the Pakistani polity for fear of charges of complicity. Pakistan today is the last country to desire additional nuclear proliferation. It is struggling hard to move beyond its reputation, especially after the favor bestowed upon India by the US-India nuclear agreement.

### **MOVING TO ZERO**

Pakistan would respond positively to any genuine move by the leading nuclear weapon states to negotiate a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons on a global basis by a date certain. This would be in keeping with Pakistan's long-held position that the best non-proliferation policy is disarmament. Pakistani officials point to the position of other nuclear weapon states—Britain, especially—that have stated that they would consider reducing their arsenals further once the major nuclear powers come down to “reasonable numbers.” This means that a disarmament treaty would become a realistic prospect only when it spells out, not a quantum leap to zero, but a sequence of obligations or stages to progressively lower numbers. France and Britain can set the standard. Today, it appears that these two nuclear weapon states have the least rationale to retain their arsenals. A treaty which, after reducing US and Russian arsenals, eventually brought in France and Britain as a second stage, would then create conditions for the remaining four nuclear weapon states (China, India, Israel, and Pakistan) to eliminate their arsenals—along with the weapons remaining in the larger powers' arsenals—in the third stage. Should such momentum develop, countries like Pakistan would likely seek to resolve outstanding conflicts so as to eliminate the conditions that led them to develop nuclear weapons in the first place.

However, Pakistan's experience during decades of disarmament negotiations gives it little confidence in the sincerity of Western powers when they state that they wish to eliminate nuclear weapons. There are three main reasons for this lack of trust. First, Pakistan has observed the US negotiate multilateral treaties with the intent of denying a capability to some while making it available to “like-minded” countries. One example occurred during the Conference on Disarmament in the United Nations in Geneva, notably during the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) deliberations. Throughout the proceedings in the mid-1990s, Western countries formed an exclusive consultative group to support each other's positions against the developing countries' interests; the latter had formed its own grouping, called the G-21. During the CTBT negotiations, France conducted nuclear tests in the Muroroa Islands, clearly undermining the basic objectives of the treaty. In 1995, however,

when India's imminent preparations for a nuclear test were discovered, India was pressured to forgo the explosions. By 1996, it became evident to India and Pakistan that the CTBT was designed to prevent nascent nuclear powers from developing reliable deterrents.<sup>§§§§§§</sup>

The US and Pakistan have a bitter history when it comes to nuclear issues, alternating between sanctions and partnership. US policy goals are often neglected for expediency. The sanctions imposed in the 1970s were lifted to persuade Pakistan to help defeat the Soviet Union in Afghanistan, only to be put back in place when the job was done.<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> The US coerced Pakistan to roll back its program unilaterally in the early 1990s, hoping to break Pakistani resolve under sanctions. That policy did not work, instead causing Pakistan to seek help from other sources, namely China.<sup>78</sup> New layers of sanctions were again applied after the 1998 tests, only to be reversed when the US again needed Pakistan's help after the 9/11 attack. Lastly, the manner in which the US abandoned its long-standing position in order to make possible nuclear trade with India has reinforced the belief in Pakistan and many other nations that disarmament is a utopian notion used for cynical national purposes.<sup>††††††</sup>

In short, if the United States wishes to create a serious disarmament initiative, it must provide a clear concept of what it is proposing. It will need to persuade many countries, not only Pakistan, that the initiative is not another self-serving 'catch them' trick disguised as disarmament. It will have to demonstrate that it is sincere in its proposals. There is a belief in Pakistan that the US and other major powers keep moving the goal posts mid-play. A set of principles and commitments that

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<sup>§§§§§§</sup> The author was present at several Conference on Disarmament debates in the mid-1990s in support of the Pakistan permanent missions. Observation of the nuclear powers' behavior during the debates was a significant factor in persuading both India and Pakistan to refrain from signing the CTBT.

<sup>\*\*\*\*\*</sup> The Carter Administration had applied nuclear sanctions against Pakistan in 1977. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan forced a change in US policy. US National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski concluded that the Afghan policy, "will require a review of our policy toward Pakistan...Our national security policy toward Pakistan cannot be dictated by our non-proliferation policy." Cited in Steve Coll, *The Ghost War: The Secret History of the CIA, Afghanistan and Bin Laden* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), page 51. When the Reagan Administration came to power, Pakistan negotiated new terms of its relations with the US, which relegated the nuclear issue to the back burner. Throughout the 1980s, to avoid imposing sanctions on Pakistan, as was required by the Pressler Amendment, the US government certified that Pakistan's nuclear program was for peaceful purposes. This waiver was not given in 1990, when the Soviet Union had left Afghanistan and the Cold War had ended, and the US then applied the sanctions required by the Pressler Amendment. See Dennis Kux, *op. cit.*, page 257.

<sup>††††††</sup> Author's discussions with Pakistani officials on 19 August 2008 on the implications of the US-India deal revealed two opposite reactions: The first was concern about the US double standard of arming India while lecturing Pakistan and, especially, anger at the arm-twisting for Pakistan not to register its protest at the IAEA Board of Governors. A second reaction was that Pakistan prudently stepped aside seeing that the action for India set an obvious precedent for an agreement with Pakistan. See Adil Sultan, "Nuclear Double Standard," *The NEWS, Pakistan* (September 20, 2008).

would assure fair play would be essential. The main players would enter a disarmament negotiation with wide disparities in capabilities relative to each other. There would need to be an assurance that the approach would not be “bottom-up,” i.e. the smaller nuclear states cannot be expected to accept far-reaching obligations unless there is first some leveling of capabilities. Pakistan would not want to find itself in a position in which it freezes its options while others keep their capabilities operational.

Pakistan fears the consequence of continuing competition between China and India. Pakistan would prefer to see rapprochement among the major powers in Asia, so that an arms competition between India and China does not force Pakistan to make excessive expenditures to keep up its minimal deterrent vis-à-vis India. Any conflict that brings the US, Japan, and India into a strategic alliance against China would force Pakistan to join one side or the other. On the other hand, a serious disarmament initiative, one that eschews an arms race in Asia, would help Pakistan in the long run.

Pakistan seeks an end to its rivalry with India and to resolve conflicts with India and Afghanistan. Pakistan would gain a great deal if it were able to open up an energy corridor between Central Asia and South Asia. Further, Pakistan’s reaction to a disarmament initiative would not be so much a question of response, as it would be about timing. The time frame of a global disarmament treaty must be preceded by progress toward conflict resolution and threat reduction. Pakistan would need assurances about conventional military forces and progress in bilateral relations with India. If these were attained, Pakistan would certainly look more favorably upon the ultimate goals of a disarmament initiative and reduce the time it believed necessary to achieve that end-state.

## **END-STATES**

Developments in the Far East are not fundamental to Pakistan’s security calculus, which has always focused narrowly on South Asia. However, should Japan develop nuclear weapon capabilities, it could be a tipping point in Asia, giving birth to a new proliferation environment. The ensuing tension in Asia would seep through to South Asia as well. Since India is being propped up by the United States as counter-weight to China, Pakistan sees the trajectory moving in a negative direction. The disarmament of North Korea is also of interest to Pakistan. Regardless of whether or not Korea is eventually unified, Pakistan would want North Korea to disarm and erase that country’s history of proliferation—that has involved Pakistan as well.

In all probability, Pakistan should be expected to play an active role in seeking to reverse any new proliferation trend in Asia. From history, it can be surmised that Pakistan's competition with India and partnership with China places it in a position where avoiding the impact of any further proliferation would be impossible, thus Pakistan should be expected to discourage any proliferation of nuclear weapons to its east or west. It would not serve Pakistan's interest. If anything, it would focus additional negative scrutiny on Pakistan.

Realistically, in the event of nuclear disarmament, the big powers would retain conventional military superiority and there would be a significant risk of a conventional arms race amongst the great powers. Pakistan would be concerned for several reasons. First, its primary threat, India, would be building up its conventional forces in competition with China. Also, unlike the case of nuclear weapons, there is no taboo on the use of conventional forces. Despite the devastation caused in Europe and Asia during the Second World War, conventional forces have been used frequently for decades. Today, conventional weapons are sophisticated and future conventional wars could be even more lethal. Second, Pakistan's fundamental reason to acquire nuclear weapons was to offset India's superior conventional forces. If Pakistan's example is considered the standard, conventional force superiority could cause other affected countries to seek to develop nuclear capabilities and undermine any disarmament treaty that was in effect—unless there was an effective enforcement regime. Third, the US, Israel, India, and Iraq under Saddam Hussein in the 1990s, have demonstrated that even when a nation has nuclear capabilities, the aggressive use of conventional forces against it cannot be ruled out. Nuclear weapon capabilities have not reduced expenditures on conventional forces. Rather, it allowed states to enhance conventional force capabilities, making use of conventional forces more feasible under the nuclear umbrella.

Thus, three interrelated steps are required if nuclear disarmament is to be successful. Regional conflict resolution, conventional forces arms control, and nuclear arms restraints should be the first stage to build confidence; they may take years. A paradigm shift is required from confrontation and use of force to cooperation and conflict resolution and disarmament. Such an environment is hard to achieve, but in regions where there is structural asymmetry, it should be recognized and not exploited. For such a regime to flourish, the bigger powers would have to take the initiative and be more magnanimous and accommodative.

## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan and Peter R Lavoy, "Pakistan: The Dilemma of Deterrence," in Muthiah Alagappa, ed., *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), page 219.
- <sup>2</sup> Peter R Lavoy, "Nuclear Proliferation Over the Next Decade: Causes, Warning Signs, and Policy Responses," *The Nonproliferation Review* (November 2006), page 441.
- <sup>3</sup> For estimates of Pakistan's nuclear weapons inventory, see Peter R Lavoy, "Islamabad's Nuclear Posture: Its Premises and Implementation," in Henry D. Sokolski, *Pakistan's Nuclear Future: Worries Beyond War* (Carlisle PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College, January 2008), pages 141-143; Institute for Science and International Security, "Global Stocks of Nuclear Explosive Materials," revised 7 September 2005, [http://www.isis-online.org/global\\_stocks/end2003/tableofcontents.html](http://www.isis-online.org/global_stocks/end2003/tableofcontents.html). A separate study by a team of Indian and Pakistani analysts puts Pakistan's plutonium inventory slightly higher and its HEU holding slightly lower. Zia Mian, A. H. Nayyar, R. Rajaraman, and M. V. Ramanna, "Fissile Materials in South Asia: The Implications of the U.S.-India Nuclear Deal," *International Panel on Fissile Materials Research Report No. 1* (September 2006), page 3, [http://www.fissilematerials.org/ipfm/site\\_down/ipfmresearchreport01.pdf](http://www.fissilematerials.org/ipfm/site_down/ipfmresearchreport01.pdf).
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- <sup>6</sup> Shuja Nawaz, *Cross Swords: Its Army, and the Wars Within* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pages 92-121.
- <sup>7</sup> See Peter R. Lavoy, "Nuclear Myths and the Causes of Nuclear Proliferation," *Security Studies* (Spring/Summer 1993), pages 192-212. Also see Feroz Hassan Khan and Peter R Lavoy, "Pakistan: The Dilemma of Deterrence," in Muthiah Alagappa, ed. *The Long Shadow: Nuclear Weapons and Security in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), page 217.
- <sup>8</sup> Scott D Sagan, "The Origins of Military Doctrine," in Peter R Lavoy, Scott D Sagan, and James J Wirtz, eds. *Planning the Unthinkable: How New Powers Will Use Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Weapons* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), page 23.
- <sup>9</sup> Kenneth N Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: Random House, 1979), page 168.
- <sup>10</sup> Scott D. Sagan, "Why do States Build Nuclear Weapons? Three Models in Search of a Bomb," *International Security* (Winter 1996/97), pages 73-85.
- <sup>11</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan, "Nuclear Weapons Motivations: Lessons from Pakistan," in Peter R Lavoy ed., *Nuclear Weapons Proliferation in the Next Decade* (New York: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group, 2006), page 71.
- <sup>12</sup> John H Gill, "India and Pakistan: A Shift in Military Calculus," in Ashley Tellis and Michael Wells, eds. *Strategic Asia 2005-06, Military Modernization in Era of Uncertainty*, (Seattle: The National Bureau of Asian Research, 2005), pages 257-67; Walter Carl Ladwig III, "A Cold Start for Hot Wars? The Indian Army's New Limited War Doctrine," *International Security* (Winter 2007/08), pages 158- 190; Gurmeet Kanwal, "Cold Start and Battle Groups for Offensive Operations," *ORF Strategic Trends* (June 2006), <http://www.observerindia.com/cms/sites/orfonline/modules/strategictrend/StrategicTrendDetail.html?cmid=1504&mmacmaid=1505>.
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- <sup>14</sup> Michael Quinlan, "How Robust is India-Pakistan Deterrence," *Survival* (Winter 2000-2001), pages 149-50.
- <sup>15</sup> T.V. Paul, ed., *The India- Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), page 8.
- <sup>16</sup> See John H Gill, "India and Pakistan: A Shift in Military Calculus," in Tellis and Wells, *op. cit.*, pages 257-67.
- <sup>17</sup> For India's armed forces' size and disposition in peace time, see Brigadier Agha M. U. Farooq, "Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: A Strategic Failure or Beginning of Regional Stability," *US War College Strategy Paper* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 19 March 2004). Also see: John Gill, *op. cit.*, pages 257-67.
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- <sup>20</sup> Scott D Sagan and Kenneth Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate Renewed* (New York: WW. Norton and Company, 2003), pages 92-95.
- <sup>21</sup> Statement of Ambassador Munir Akram, Pakistan's permanent representative to the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva, Switzerland (June 2, 1998).
- <sup>22</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan, "The Independence-Dependence Paradox: Stability Dilemma in South Asia," *Arms Control Today* (October 2003), pages 15-19.
- <sup>23</sup> Khan and Lavoy, *op. cit.*, pages 217-222.
- <sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, page 219.
- <sup>25</sup> For a detailed explanation of Pakistani nuclear command and controls, see International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Nuclear Black Markets: Pakistan, A.Q. Khan and the Rise of Proliferation Networks, a Net Assessment* (London: IISS Dossier, 2007).
- <sup>26</sup> Allegedly, a US Special Forces unit was training with Israel's most trusted anti-terrorist unit. See: Ben Fenton, "US Special Unit Stands by to Steal Atomic Warheads," *The Telegraph* (29 October 2001), [http://portal.telegraph.co.uk/core/Content/displayPrintable.jhtml;\\$sessionid\\$XTAR4U](http://portal.telegraph.co.uk/core/Content/displayPrintable.jhtml;$sessionid$XTAR4U); see also, Seymour Hersh, "Watching the Warheads: The Risks to Pakistan's Nuclear Arsenal," *The New Yorker Magazine* (November 5, 2001), pages 48-54. According to Hersh, the US had prepared, "an elite Pentagon undercover unit trained to slip into foreign countries and find suspected nuclear weapons, and disarm them if necessary, [and] has explored plans for an operation in Pakistan.;" David Albright, "Securing Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons' Complex," Paper commissioned and sponsored by Stanley Foundation for the 42<sup>nd</sup> Strategy for Peace Conference, *Strategies for Regional Security (South Asia Working Group)*, October 25-27, 2001; Nigel Hawkes, "The Nuclear Threat: Pakistan Could Lose Control Of Its Arsenal," *Times Online* (September 20, 2001), <http://www.timesonline.co.uk/article/0,,28-114933,00.html>.
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- <sup>28</sup> Adil Sultan, "Nuclear Double Standard," *The NEWS* (September 20, 2008), page x.
- <sup>29</sup> Author conversations with Pakistani officials during visit to Islamabad in August 2008.
- <sup>30</sup> Daryl Kimball on C-Span on 9 September 2008 available at [http://www.c-spanarchives.org/library/index.php?main\\_page=product\\_video\\_info&products\\_id=280986-6](http://www.c-spanarchives.org/library/index.php?main_page=product_video_info&products_id=280986-6).

- <sup>31</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan and Peter R Lavoy, *op. cit.*, pages 223-224.
- <sup>32</sup> Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram at the Special Session of the Conference on Disarmament on 02 June 1998.
- <sup>33</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan, "Nuclear Proliferation Motivations: Lessons From Pakistan," *The Nonproliferation Review* (November 2006), pages 501-17.
- <sup>34</sup> "Nuclear Black Markets," *op. cit.*, page 9.
- <sup>35</sup> "Nuclear Black Markets," *op. cit.*, pages 107-18.
- <sup>36</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan and Peter R Lavoy, *op. cit.*, pages 215-40.
- <sup>37</sup> Andrew C. Winner and Toshi Yoshihara, *Nuclear Stability in South Asia* (Boston: The Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, 2001), pages 47-48.
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- <sup>41</sup> Michael Mandelbaum "Lessons of the Next Nuclear War," *Foreign Affairs* (March/ April 1995), pages 22-37.
- <sup>42</sup> Israel's special status was legitimized as early as 1969 when President Nixon agreed secretly with Prime Minister Golda Meir on a "don't ask, don't tell" pledge. See Avner Cohen, *Israel and the Bomb* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), pages 336-338; Joseph Cirincione et al, *Deadly Arsenal* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), pages 225- 226.
- <sup>43</sup> For estimates of Pakistan's nuclear materials production capabilities, see Muthiah Alagappa, *op. cit.*, pages 5-16. Also see London Dossier, *op. cit.*
- <sup>44</sup> The most famous report was written by David Albright and Paul Brennan, "Second Khushab Plutonium Production Reactor Nears Completion," Institute for Science and International Security (September 18, 2008), available at [http://www.isis-online.org/publications/southasia/Khushab\\_18September2008.pdf](http://www.isis-online.org/publications/southasia/Khushab_18September2008.pdf). For Pakistan's official rebuttal to an earlier report see <http://www.pakistanlink.com/Headlines/June07/23/07.htm>.
- <sup>45</sup> Based on the author's calculations from public sources, particularly the IISS *London Dossier*, *op. cit.*, published in 2007. Also, see estimates in Muthiah Alagappa, *op. cit.*
- <sup>46</sup> John Grevatt, "USAF Awards Lockheed Martin Pakistan's F-16 Upgrade," *Jane's Defence Industry* (January 1, 2007). Cited in Peter R Lavoy "Islamabad's Nuclear Posture: Its Premises and Implementation" in Henry D Sokolski ed. *Pakistan Nuclear Future: Worries Beyond War* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, January 2008), page 141.
- <sup>47</sup> Information contained in the table is taken from various sources, including, "Pakistan: Air Force," *Jane's World Air Forces* (28 November 2006), and "Pakistan: Armed Forces," *Jane's Sentinel Security Assessment: South Asia* (22 November 2006) – both sources are subscription websites. Also see, Rodney Jones, *op. cit.*, pages 16-18.
- <sup>48</sup> Agha Shahi, Zulfiqar Khan and Abdul Sattar, "Securing Nuclear Peace," *The News International Pakistan* (5 October 1999), page 4.

- <sup>49</sup> Shuja Nawaz, *Cross Swords: Pakistan, Its Army, and the Wars Within* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), pages 219-48; Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army: Wars and Insurrections* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pages 63-78.
- <sup>50</sup> Peter R Lavoy, "The Costs of Nuclear Weapons in South Asia?," in D.R. SarDesai and Raju G.C. Thomas, eds., *Nuclear India in the Twenty-First Century* (New York: Palgrave- Macmillan, 2002), pages 259-61.
- <sup>51</sup> For a detailed discussion see, Feroz Hassan Khan and Peter R Lavoy, *op. cit.*, page 219.
- <sup>52</sup> John Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2001), page 187.
- <sup>53</sup> For China's apprehensions about India's role as an expansionist power, see Shao Zhiyong, "India's Big Power Dream," *Beijing Review* (April 12, 2001), cited in Andrew Scobell, "Cult of Defense and Great Power Dreams: The Influence of Strategic Culture on China's Relationship with India," in Michael Chambers, ed. *South Asia in 2020: Future Strategic Balances and Alliances* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: US Army War College, 2002), pages 344-45; John Garver, *op. cit.*, page 188.
- <sup>54</sup> John Garver, *op. cit.*, page 189.
- <sup>55</sup> London Dossier, *op. cit.*, page 25.
- <sup>56</sup> John Garver, "The Future of the Sino- Pakistani Entente Cordiale," in Michael Chambers, *op. cit.*, pages 344-45; John Garver, *op. cit.*, pages 402-05.
- <sup>57</sup> US Assistant Secretary of State Robert Einhorn in testimony before the US Senate in 1997 alleged strong evidence of Chinese support to Pakistan. See *Proliferation: Chinese Case Studies*, Hearing Before the Subcommittee on International Security, Proliferation, and Federal Services of the Committee on Governmental Affairs, United States Senate, 105<sup>th</sup> Congress, 1<sup>st</sup> Session (April 10, 1997), pages 8, 12.
- <sup>58</sup> Judith Miller, "U.S. Is Holding Up Peking Atom Talks," *New York Times* (September 19, 1982), page 11.
- <sup>59</sup> Simon Henderson, "Why Pakistan May Not Need to Test a Nuclear Device," *Financial Times* (August 14, 1984), page 3; also see Mark Hibbs, "Despite U.S. Alarm over Algeria, Europeans Won't Blacklist China," *Nucleonics Week* (May 23, 1991), page 1.
- <sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*
- <sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*; John Garver, *op. cit.*, pages 404-05.
- <sup>62</sup> Joseph Cirincione with Jon Wolfsthal and Miriam Rajkumar, *Deadly Arsenal: Tracking Weapons of Mass Destruction* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2005), pages 213-15.
- <sup>63</sup> John Garver, *op. cit.*, page 404; Joseph Cirincione, *op. cit.*, page 215.
- <sup>64</sup> John Garver, *op. cit.*, page 407.
- <sup>65</sup> Former Foreign Minister Gauhar Ayub Khan, cited in, "Pakistan: Beware Indian, Israeli Propaganda on 'Islamic Bomb,'" FBIS-NES-98-167 (June 16, 1998), cited in *Ethics and Weapons of Mass Destruction: Religious and Secular Perspectives*, edited by Sohail H. Hashmi and Steven P. Lee (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), page 341.
- <sup>66</sup> "Saudi Nuclear Pact," *Washington Post* (January 18, 1981) cited in Henry D Sokolski ed. *Pakistan Nuclear Future: Worries Beyond War* (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, January 2008), pages 26-28; Mohammad Al- Khilewi, "Saudi Arabia is Trying to Kill Me," *Middle East Quarterly* (September 1998), page 74.
- <sup>67</sup> London Dossier, *op. cit.*, page 83.
- <sup>68</sup> Wyn Q Bowen, *op. cit.*, pages 30-31.
- <sup>69</sup> London Dossier. *op. cit.*, page 30.

- <sup>70</sup> Malfrid Braut-Hegghammer, "Libya's Nuclear Turnaround: Perspectives from Tripoli," *Middle East Journal* (Winter 2008), page 69.
- <sup>71</sup> Khurshid Ahmad, "Nuclear Deterrence, CTBT, IMF Bail-outs and Debt Dependence," *Tarjuman al-Qur'an* (December 1980), cited in Sohail H. Hashmi, "Islamic Ethics: An Argument for Nonproliferation," in Hashmi and Lee, *op. cit.*, page 341.
- <sup>72</sup> Feroz Hassan Khan and Peter R Lavoy, *op. cit.*, pages 221-23.
- <sup>73</sup> Address by Mr Mohammad Ayub Khan, President of Pakistan, 26 September 1962, in General Assembly Official Records, 17th Session 1133rd Plenary Meeting, 26 September 1962, page 150. Quoted in Bhumitra Chakma, "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons," (New York: Routledge, 2009), page 14.
- <sup>74</sup> For a detailed analysis of the AQ Khan network's activities and Pakistani efforts to strengthen its system of controls, see *London Dossier, op. cit.*
- <sup>75</sup> See Ashok Kapur, *Pakistan's Nuclear Development* (New York: Croom Helm, 1987); Ziba Moshaver, *Nuclear Weapons Proliferation in the Indian Subcontinent* (New York: St. Martin's, 1991).
- <sup>76</sup> Statement by Ambassador Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Conference on Disarmament, Geneva, 14 May 1998.
- <sup>77</sup> See Pak's vision 2030 project, available at [http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\04\09\story\\_9-4-2008](http://www.dailytimes.com.pk/default.asp?page=2008\04\09\story_9-4-2008), page 5.
- <sup>78</sup> John Garver, *op. cit.*, pages 403-408.

# ISRAELI PERSPECTIVES ON THE GLOBAL ELIMINATION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

*Shlomo Brom*

Israel is in a unique position among the perceived nuclear powers—a state recognized as a nuclear power outside the five nuclear states accepted by the Nuclear Proliferation Treaty (NPT), but not admitting to be one. The three other states that were in a similar position, India, Pakistan and North Korea, performed tests, declared their nuclear capabilities, and are striving to become accepted nuclear powers. Israel sticks to a policy of nuclear ambiguity or opacity; it is very comfortable with the perception that it is a nuclear power but does not admit it. That makes Israel a unique country and an interesting case when trying to understand perspectives on the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

## **THE ISRAELI NUCLEAR OPTION – MOTIVATIONS AND PURPOSES**

Israel's nuclear ambitions are almost as old as the state itself. When the state of Israel exited the 1948-1949 War of Independence victorious but bruised, David Ben-Gurion, Israel's first prime minister, was acutely aware of the existential security predicament Israel faced because of the asymmetry between it and its Arab neighbors. He viewed the Arab-Israeli conflict as deep and lasting and believed that it could be resolved only after the Arabs had accepted the existence of Israel as an established and irreversible fact. The combination of asymmetrical capabilities and lasting conflict caused Israel to assume a deterrent posture that prevents its Arab neighbors from posing an existential threat to Israel. Moreover, Ben-Gurion believed that a deterrent based only on conventional military capabilities would not be credible because the Arabs would assume that they would eventually be capable of changing the conventional balance of forces due to their greater resources. In this sense, the Israeli nuclear option was supposed to be the great equalizer that corrects the asymmetry in the balance of resources.<sup>1</sup>

Thus, from its inception, the role of the nuclear option was to prevent the realization of existential threats to the young state. During the first 30 years of Israel's existence, the existential threat was conceptualized by a scenario in which a coalition of Arab states launched a massive land invasion against the state of Israel. This doomsday scenario was realized twice, in the 1948-49 war and in the 1973 war, but there was a substantial difference between the two wars. While the first was a total war in which the declared objective of the invading

Arab armies was to destroy the infant state, the second was a limited war aimed at regaining the territories occupied in 1967 by achieving limited territorial gains and exerting a significant cost on the Israeli Defense Force (IDF). The accepted assessment in Israel is that one of the main reasons for Egypt and Syria's limited objectives in the 1973 war was their recognition of Israel's nuclear option. This is cited frequently as proof of the validity of Israel's nuclear strategy.<sup>2</sup>

During the first years of development of Israel's nuclear option, two schools of thought ruled the debate. The first supported the idea that the nuclear option should be the principal mainstay of Israel's deterrent posture, even at the expense of Israel's conventional forces, thus avoiding possible bankruptcy because of huge defense expenditures. This paradigm also had supporters in Israeli academia<sup>3</sup>. The second school of thought considered the nuclear option an instrument of last resort, an insurance policy that hopefully would never be used. Supporters of the second school argued that Israel should build up its conventional military power and manage its wars as if the nuclear option did not exist. Eventually, the second school of thought gained dominance in the Israeli strategic community. What Israel's prime minister, Levy Eshkol, referred to as "The Samson Option" became the basic Israeli strategic concept—the nuclear option as a national insurance policy.<sup>4</sup>

According to one source, when the Israeli nuclear doctrine was first formulated in 1965-66, four concrete scenarios were presented as existential threats and thought to justify the use of nuclear weapons: (i) a successful Arab military penetration into populated areas within Israel's (pre-1967) borders; (ii) the destruction of the Israeli Air Force; (iii) the exposure of Israeli cities to massive and devastating air attacks or to possible chemical or biological attacks; and (iv) the use of nuclear weapons against Israeli territory.<sup>5</sup>

Much has changed in the Middle East and in the Arab-Israeli relationship in the more than 40 years since the doctrine's development. Israel has succeeded in retaining a qualitative edge and conventional military superiority over any probable anti-Israel Arab military alliance. That is due, to a great extent, to US support and its pledge to maintain Israel's qualitative advantage. Israel's continuous military superiority is one of the reasons for a change in the Arab approach towards Israel. Two Arab states, Egypt and Jordan, have concluded peace treaties with Israel, while others have been involved in peace negotiations with Israel at various times. Currently, no Arab government declares that Israel should not exist and/or states that its objective is to destroy the state of Israel. The only government that holds these positions is Iran, a Muslim non-Arab country. The culmination of this change in the positions of the Arab governments

was the so-called “Arab peace initiative,” which was adopted as an Arab League resolution in Beirut on March 28, 2002. It offered Israel normalization of relations and comprehensive peace agreements with all Arab states, with the condition that Israel reach peace agreements with Syria and the Palestinians.\*

Nevertheless, Israel’s strategic thinking is still affected by a sense of vulnerability and fragility. Israelis think that the peace agreements are fragile because they were concluded by governments whose citizens’ attitudes are very hostile to Israel. Most regimes in the Arab Middle East are non-democratic and have to deal internally with strong Islamic oppositions. From the Israeli perspective, the current regimes may crumble and be replaced by Islamic governments not committed to upholding the agreements made by the former leaders. The events in Iran 30 years ago have had a lasting effect on Israeli perceptions. Until 1979, Israel and the Shah’s government of Iran were allies with a joint strategy aimed at defending their mutual interests vis-à-vis the Arab states of the Middle East. The Islamic revolution in Iran reversed everything and turned Iran into Israel’s most vitriolic enemy. Israelis are concerned that similar developments in Arab states that concluded peace treaties with Israel are possible.<sup>6</sup>

The nature of security threats to Israel has changed as well. Most of the classic last resort scenarios that dominated the 1965-66 debate have lost much of their relevancy. The states that are still hostile to Israel are not capable of launching seriously threatening land invasions or devastating air attacks against Israel. Most of the relevant threats today are not existential threats. Instead they threaten to prevent Israeli citizens from living normal, routine, and secure lives through the use of terrorism or extended harassment by rockets launched from a distance. There is only one existential threat that is looming in the future, that of a hostile state committed to the idea of destroying Israel obtaining nuclear weapons and acting on calls for Israel to be “wiped off the map.”<sup>7</sup>

There is also debate in Israel today about whether chemical and biological weapons pose an existential threat. It is acknowledged that the military utility of these weapons against armed forces equipped with suitable protective gear is limited. The concern is their use against Israel’s civilian population, which would be more vulnerable. The Israeli response to this threat is a combination of passive defense, such as the distribution of personal protection gear and building codes that require a room that can be easily sealed in each apartment or house, and

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\* See the text of the Arab Peace Initiative at <http://www.albab.com/arab/docs/league/peace02.htm>.

active defense with a national missile defense system. The assumption is that the effectiveness of a chemical or biological attack will depend to a great extent on the number of missiles that hit their targets. The missile defense system probably could not intercept all incoming missiles, but it could diminish substantially the number of missiles that reach their destinations. Nevertheless, there is still concern that all these protective means would reduce casualties, but not to a point that would prevent these attacks from having a devastating effect on public morale.

Thus, Israel apparently also considers its nuclear option as means to deter its enemies from use of chemical and biological weapons.<sup>8</sup> Prior to the first Gulf War, Israel's military and political leaders threatened a devastating response if Iraq used chemical and biological weapons in an effort to deter Saddam Hussein.<sup>9</sup> These threats were supported by Israel's ballistic missile test in the Mediterranean on December 22, 1990.<sup>10</sup> The assumption that such a test would deter Hussein was probably based on the common understanding that Israeli ballistic missiles are intended to be delivery vehicles for nuclear weapons.

Israel is anxious to link the nuclear option only to last resort scenarios. Use of nuclear weapons in war-fighting roles would contradict this doctrine. At the same time there is uncertainty as to the true extent of Israel's nuclear capabilities. In 1991, for example, Seymour Hersh, in his book, *The Samson Option*, proposed that Israel might possess hundreds of nuclear weapons of all types, from low-yield enhanced radiation designs, including those in the form of mines and artillery shells, to large thermonuclear weapons.<sup>11</sup> There is no evidence to support this speculation, however, and it seems to the writer that Israel has adhered to its basic doctrine of the nuclear option as a "last resort."

### **WHO IS THE THREAT?**

In Israeli thinking, a threat is created when there is a combination of intentions and capabilities. Thus, Israel does not look at Turkey's military capabilities as a threat, although Turkey has in its possession the largest military force in the Middle East. Turkey is not considered a threat because it is not hostile to Israel; the two countries have a friendly relationship. The same was true for Iran before the 1979 revolution. Israel cooperated strategically with the Shah's Iran and was not concerned by the accelerated military build up that took place under the Shah's regime. There were also indications at the time that the Shah had nuclear ambitions, which were not cause for concern in Israel. After the 1979 revolution, however, Israel's perception of Iran changed completely. Iran's Islamic regime is extremely hostile to Israel, does not recognize its right to exist, and declares that

it should be wiped out.<sup>†</sup> As a result, Israel perceives that Iran poses the most severe threat to its security and even existence.

At present none of the existing nuclear powers are perceived as threats to Israel. At the time of the inception of Pakistani military nuclear capabilities, the term “Islamic bomb” was frequently used when referring to the Pakistani program, and there were some rumors that Israel was cooperating with India in preparing plans for an attack on the Pakistani nuclear facilities. These rumors were never verified and it now seems they were false. Throughout the years, the relationship between Israel and Pakistan has not been contentious and Israel has not felt threatened by Pakistan. This may change if the nature of the Pakistani regime changes and it becomes an Islamic regime adhering to anti-Israeli ideology.

Israel’s perception of the threat posed by Iran has intensified over the past 20 years. Iran has made its intentions clear. Iranian leaders have repeatedly declared that Israel has no right to exist and should be wiped off the earth. The Israeli perception is that Iran has continuously shown that it is serious by assisting any party willing to act violently against Israel and putting pressure on those groups to bolster their activities against Israel. This has been a comprehensive policy executed without exceptions. Assistance has been given to Shiite groups, such as Hizballah, in Lebanon and to some Sunni groups, including some Palestinian terror groups associated with Fatah that were operating in the West Bank. In fact, Iran was using these groups as proxies in its war against Israel.<sup>12</sup>

Currently, Iran does not possess capabilities that enable it to pose a direct threat to Israel. Its vast army does not pose a threat because of its distance from Israel. Its air force capabilities are very limited, especially from distant ranges. It has a small inventory of long range ballistic missiles that can reach Israel, but they would probably have difficulties penetrating the Israeli missile defense shield in meaningful numbers.<sup>13</sup> Iran is intensifying Israeli threat perceptions, however, by the anticipation that Iran may acquire nuclear weapon capabilities that will be combined with its proven hostile intentions towards Israel.

Following the Israeli attack and destruction of Osiraq, the Iraqi reactor, in 1981, many researchers proposed that Israel had adopted a comprehensive preventive

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<sup>†</sup> Ahmadinejad (President of Iran): “Our dear Imam (referring to Ayatolla Khomeini) said that the regime occupying Palestine should be wiped off the map and this was a very wise statement.” Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (October 26, 2005). Ahmadinejad: “Although the main solution is for the elimination of the Zionist regime, at this stage an immediate cease-fire must be implemented.” in Sean Young, “Ahmadinejad: Destroy Israel, End Crisis,” The Associated Press (August 3, 2006).

counter-proliferation doctrine sometimes referred to as the “Begin Doctrine.” This may be the Israeli doctrine, but its application is dependent upon the feasibility of carrying out such a course of action and its costs.<sup>14</sup>

The execution of this policy is especially tough in the case of Iran for a number of reasons: Iran’s distance from Israel and the lack of closer bases from which Israel can operate; the potential global repercussions of such an Israeli operation, such as its potential effect on the global energy market leading to a dramatic increase in the price of oil; and potential Iranian reprisals against Israel.<sup>15</sup>

These restraints have two main implications. The first is a clear preference of the Israeli government for a political solution that would arrest the Iranian nuclear program short of a weapons capability. This solution should be based on a combination of sticks and carrots. A system of severe international sanctions—economic and political—would be applied against Iran as long as it does not stop its attempts to produce fissile material and other activities that have potential military use, combined with a threat of military attack.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, the great powers need to show a willingness to assist Iran in nuclear enterprises that have no military implications. If such a political effort fails, Israel will very seriously consider the military option. The second major implication is that Israel might decide that the “Begin Doctrine” cannot be applied in the case of Iran because the military option is not viable, and Israel will have to face an extremely hostile state armed with nuclear weapons. That possibility is a source of deep concern in Israel.<sup>17</sup>

Part of the discourse surrounding this subject in Israel dwells on the question of whether the current Iranian regime can be considered a rational actor. Some argue that as an extreme Islamic government committed to its fatalistic ideology, it might make decisions that would not be considered rational according to Western norms. Others argue that the current regime is more pragmatic and rational than its rhetoric suggests, in the sense that it makes calculations of costs and benefits and decides accordingly. In either case it is acknowledged that the value system of this Iranian regime is different than that of Western societies; for example, it is thought that the value ascribed to human life is lower. There is a greater tendency to be willing to make sacrifices in human life for the greater good. That implies that this kind of regime might take greater risks than others. On the other hand, analysis of the Iranian modus operandi does not substantiate the assumption that Iran is willing to pay very high costs whether in human life or other resources unless it perceives no other choice. It is true that Iran suffered a very large number of casualties in the Iran-Iraq war, but that was in a war that it did not initiate and was considered an existential war from the point of view of

the regime. The fact of the matter is that the regime took the painful decision to stop the war far absent of victory when the number of casualties started to mount and ballistic missile attacks on Iranian cities were causing a relatively large number of casualties among Iranian civilians. Since then, Iranian conduct has been characterized by caution. They are not averse to using violence against perceived adversaries, but they prefer not to be directly involved and to use proxies, thus minimizing the costs involved and possible retaliation. That is also the way Iran operates against Israel.<sup>18</sup>

Israel believes that the nuclearization of Iran may bring about a chain reaction of proliferation. Other actors in the Middle East, such as Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Algeria, who were willing to accept Israel's nuclear option because it was undeclared and because Israel is perceived as a responsible actor in the region, may find it impossible to live with a nuclear-capable Iran without having a similar capability to deter it.<sup>19</sup>

All these developments and assumptions are leading to a situation in which, gradually, the deterrence of other regional nuclear powers is becoming the main purpose of the Israeli nuclear option. The other purpose of the nuclear option, as the ultimate insurance policy, is becoming less significant, but only in relative terms.

### **DOES ISRAEL HAVE REGIONAL AMBITIONS?**

Nuclear programs are sometimes motivated by regional ambitions. There is a perception in Israel that one of Iran's main motivations in pursuing its nuclear program is a desire to gain the status of a regional power and have a hegemonic position in the Gulf area. That may also motivate a state like Egypt to follow Iran, because Egypt considers itself the leader of the Arab World and a leading player in the Islamic world. States tend to apply their way of thinking to other states and so there is a suspicion in the Arab World that Israel strives for hegemonic posture in the Middle East. This perception, for example, was one of the main determinants of Egypt's policies towards Israel during the Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) talks in the 1990s.<sup>‡</sup> Egypt wished to curb what it considered Israel's growing connections with, and influence on, states in the Middle East.<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>‡</sup> The Arms Control and Regional Security Group was one of the multilateral negotiations groups that were established following the Madrid Conference in 1991.

That is certainly not the Israeli perception. Israel looks upon itself as an inherently isolated state in the region because of its very character. It is a Jewish state in a region which is mostly Arab and predominantly Islamic. It is considered by many to be a foreign implant on the region's soil. Its presence is accepted as fact but that does not mean that it is liked. How can a state that is in such a situation have ambitions for regional leadership or hegemony? Actually, Israel is somewhat schizophrenic about its own identity as a Middle Eastern state because it considers itself a part of the West, linked more strongly to Europe than to the Middle East. That was the reason Shimon Peres' ideas of the "New Middle East" were received with scorn by many Israelis. Some activities initiated by Mr. Peres to make progress toward this "New Middle East" were among the reasons that created a perception among some Arab observers of an Israeli drive towards leadership, while in reality they reflected only an Israeli desire to be accepted as a normal state.<sup>§</sup>

This lack of regional ambitions was one of the reasons behind Israel's motivation to retain a low nuclear profile and to remain faithful for so many years to the policy of nuclear opacity.

### **DOES ISRAEL HAVE GLOBAL NUCLEAR AMBITIONS?**

Israel does not pretend to be a power on the world stage. Through all its history, it has always been anxious to have a world power as its ally, being aware of its inherent weakness as a small isolated nation that does not belong to any block. Ironically, only in 2008, sixty years after it was admitted to the organization, did one of the groups of states that exist in the UN (the European group) agree to accept Israel as a member state. Therefore, the Israelis believe it is ridiculous to expect that the nuclear option would grant Israel with prestige and power in the global arena.

However, that does not mean that the Israeli nuclear option has no role in the global arena. It serves also as a deterrent vis-à-vis global powers and the international community. The aim of the deterrent on this level is not to deter global powers from attacking Israel. Israel is not concerned about the possibility of attacks by non-regional powers. Israel perceives that many of the world's powers are concerned about scenarios that might push Israel to realize its nuclear

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<sup>§</sup> Mr. Peres' "New Middle East" idea was his program to create a regional community that would live in peace and openness and have strong mutual economic ties in the Middle East. During the 1990s, he initiated a number of regional conferences to discuss economic cooperation. In the Arab world, prone to conspiracy theories, it led to a suspicion that after failing to achieve regional hegemony with its military superiority, Israel was trying to achieve the same goal with its economic power.

option. These concerns provide strong motivation for world powers to prevent the occurrence of such scenarios. In fact, Israel presents two alternatives to the world community: help us to remove threats to our existence or we will be pushed to do things that you will regret. Realizing the first alternative, of course, serves the Israeli objective of preventing the realization of existential threats, while not forcing its nuclear option.

One example that shows the effect of the Israeli nuclear option on the global stage is the US commitment to maintain the qualitative edge of Israel's armed forces. For many years, the US was reluctant to become Israel's weapon supplier. It changed its policy during the Kennedy Administration, and it seems that information about the Israeli nuclear program exposed during this period played an important role in the president's decision, because he was aware of the linkage between the Israeli nuclear program and Israel's levels of threat perception. In the meetings between President Kennedy and Prime Minister Eshkol and in the exchange of letters among them that followed, Eshkol's main goal was the creation of a link between the Israeli nuclear program and US attentiveness to Israeli security demands, which he felt he achieved.<sup>21</sup> Another example is the 1973 war, considered the only case in which there was real debate by Israeli leaders about exercising the nuclear option. It is assumed that this was a major US consideration in deciding, after some delay, to provide replenishment to Israel through air lifts and in giving massive military assistance to Israel after the war.<sup>22</sup>

## **ISRAEL'S NUCLEAR PLANS**

As previously stated, there is a great deal of uncertainty about the true extent of Israel's nuclear capabilities. It is generally assumed that Israel is the sixth nuclear nation in terms of the size of its arsenal. It is widely believed that Israel's status as a nuclear weapon state resembles that of the old members of the nuclear club (such as France and the UK) in terms of the quality of its arsenal, delivery means, and command and control more closely than that of the new members (such as India and Pakistan),<sup>23</sup> but there is no authoritative information on the composition and quality of Israel's arsenal. Speculation on the number of warheads range from 60 to 200, and cover the full range from mines and shells to large thermonuclear weapons, once again with no authoritative information.\*\*

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\*\* According to a US Defense Intelligence Agency report issued in 1999, Israel had 60-80 nuclear weapons. According to the 2007 SIPRI report, Israel has 100-200 nuclear weapons.

The assumption that Iran may succeed in obtaining nuclear weapon capabilities leads to speculation that Israel may consider modifications to its current nuclear posture. Those considerations probably would focus on three subjects: (i) what should be done to strengthen Israel's deterrence? (ii) how much and in what way would the relationship with the US contribute to the deterrence of Iran? and (iii) How will it influence Israel's public policy; namely, how will it affect the nuclear opacity policy?

Concerning Israeli indigenous capabilities, the main question will probably be whether Israel can achieve sufficient deterrence by presenting a credible second strike capability. Answers to that question may have implications for the nuclear arsenal itself, but, more importantly, may affect the delivery means. It is assumed that Israel has a variety of delivery options that include Jericho II ballistic missiles and its fleet of F-16 and F-15 aircraft. It may be that media reports about Israel's acquisition of German manufactured submarines that are equipped with Israeli manufactured cruise missiles are an indication of first steps being taken to enhance Israel's second strike capability.<sup>24</sup> There is no real public discourse on these subjects and no authoritative information, although there have been some beginnings of academic discussion.<sup>25</sup>

Israel will have to strike a balance between its dependence on its own deterrent and dependence on US extended deterrence. Decision makers are obviously aware of the inherent problems of extended deterrence and its credibility. Would the US be willing to threaten Iran with the use of nuclear weapons and face the possible scenario of a nuclear clash with another nuclear power, albeit a small one, for Israel? How much can Israel trust such assurances?

Israel must also consider how it could build a US-Israel relationship that would make extended deterrence more credible. Could the conclusion of a defense treaty be an effective way of doing it? The discussion of the feasibility and desirability of such a defense treaty is public and open, although not always related directly to the question of nuclear deterrence.<sup>26</sup>

The need to project a credible deterrent posture may finally lead Israel to re-evaluate the efficacy of the "nuclear opacity policy."<sup>27</sup> There is no previous experience with a stable balance of deterrence between two nuclear powers in a situation in which one of the powers declares and exposes its capabilities to cause unbearable pain to the other side. It is possible that Israel would decide that "opacity" makes deterrence too fragile, and that Israel has no alternative but to radically change its exposure policy, with the possible political pressure put on Israel to disarm. The decision will, of course, be dependent on Iran's conduct.

Will it move itself to an overt nuclear posture or emulate the Israeli policy of nuclear opacity?

## **PROLIFERATION CONCERNS**

According to the Israeli mindset, the proliferation effects of a successful Iranian program in military nuclear development should be a major source of concern. Although it may be possible to achieve a stable balance of mutual deterrence between Israel and Iran, the nuclearization of Iran could accelerate nuclear proliferation in the Middle East. It is not a coincidence that in the 11 months between February 2006 and January 2007, at least 13 countries in the Middle East announced new or revived plans to pursue civilian nuclear energy.<sup>28</sup> The reasons are not the rising costs of fossil energy, which are often cited, but political considerations stemming from the concerns raised by Iran's nuclear program. The purpose of some of these announcements may be to deliver a message to the international community that Iran should be stopped, otherwise further proliferation is unavoidable. However, Israel has to take into account that some of these announcements may reflect real intentions. Thus, it seems reasonable that a state such as Egypt, which perceives itself as a major Middle Eastern power and the leader of the Arab world, would find it very difficult to withstand a situation in which the only two perceived nuclear powers in the Middle East are non-Arab states.

## **ISRAEL'S PAST APPROACH TOWARDS NUCLEAR ARMS CONTROL IN THE MIDDLE EAST**

Israel's traditional approach to nuclear arms control in the Middle East is schizophrenic. On the one hand, Israel acknowledges the importance of the NPT as a global regime that for a long time was quite successful in limiting the proliferation of nuclear weapons and creating a norm of non-proliferation. On the other hand, Israel is not willing to join the NPT and give up its own nuclear option. This contradictory, and some would say "hypocritical" approach, is manifested clearly by the Israeli policy on establishing a Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East. On the one hand, the Israeli government adopted this idea rhetorically as part of the broader concept of establishing a zone free of surface-to-surface missiles and of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons in the Middle East, with adherence to the agreement verifiable by each of the parties.<sup>29</sup> On the other hand, Israel was not willing to actually enter talks to establish the zone and treated the idea more as a visionary goal that might be implemented in the context of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. The debate between Egypt and Israel on that subject was one of the main reasons that, in 1995, led to the end of talks in the framework of the Arms Control and

Regional Security group (ACRS) that was part of the Multilateral Middle East peace talks begun at the Madrid conference in 1992.<sup>30</sup>

The place of nuclear arms control on the official Israeli agenda and in unofficial discourse depends on two main parameters: the level of external pressure and the level of optimism about possible developments in the peace process. Global initiatives, especially when they come from the US, force the Israeli government to consider nuclear arms control ideas and decide on a position. Moreover, at a time of optimism, when the general perception is that there has been progress in the peace process, threat perceptions change and there is a greater willingness to take risks and consider arms control ideas that may limit Israel's military capabilities along with those of its adversaries.

For both those reasons, arms control was relatively higher on the Israeli agenda during the first half of the 1990s, at the height of the peace process. It gradually faded away when the peace process stumbled into serious difficulties, and it completely disappeared from Israel's agenda at the beginning of the present decade when the Bush Administration adopted a negative policy towards arms control initiatives in general.

If one wishes to understand Israel's policy toward nuclear arms control, it is necessary to revisit Israeli policy statements during the 1990s and analyze what effect the last decade's developments may have had on Israeli positions. Probably the most authoritative presentation of Israel's arms control policies was made by a former director general of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ambassador Eytan Bentsur, in a statement before the UN Conference on Disarmament on September 4, 1997.<sup>31</sup> In this statement, Bentsur listed the guiding principles of Israel's approach to regional security, arms control, and disarmament.

- Peace must come with security—meaning that even in times of comprehensive peace, Israel cannot give up the security capabilities that offset its strategic vulnerabilities and disadvantageous disparities vis-à-vis neighboring states.
- The peace process should be free of terrorism and violence—states using these instruments cannot be partners in any regional security process and arms control negotiations.
- Regional cooperation is an essential part of security and stability.
- Peace and normalization are one and indivisible.

One important implication of these principles is that the Israeli approach to arms control is regional. Global conventions and regimes are important, but they do not respond effectively to the specific problems and characteristics of the Middle East.

Based on the four general principles, Ambassador Bentsur proceeded to list several basic premises:

- Arms control and the regional security process should enhance the security of every state participating in it. This premise reflects the perception in Israel that, from the point of view of the Arab states, the purpose of the arms control process is to weaken Israel by denying it the capabilities that offset its vulnerabilities.
- All steps taken in such a process should increase the overall stability of the region.
- Each state is entitled to equally high levels of overall security, defined as the freedom from threats to its existence and well-being.
- Every state has the right to define the threats it considers relevant to its own security – arms control and regional security process should provide adequate responses to these defined threats.
- The process should take into account not only individual states, but also possible coalitions – any agreement that is based on the conception of a balance of forces should take into account that Israel may face different potential Arab/Muslim anti-Israel coalitions in the Middle East.

In the next phase of the presentation, Bentsur provided the main guidelines for the Israeli positions on arms control and regional security processes:

- The peace process is paramount and the eventual peace must be durable and comprehensive.
- The peace process must be regional and embrace every state in the region. Confidence building and security measures have to be developed within this framework.
- A step-by-step approach is required—any attempt to rush the process will make it collapse.
- The progress achieved in the transformation of the region into a more peaceful, stable, and secure environment will govern the pace and scope of the negotiation and implementation of arms control measures.

Ambassador Bentsur concluded his statement by elaborating Israel's positions on specific arms control initiatives, among them several relating to nuclear arms control:

- The Non-Proliferation Treaty – Israel supports the NPT but does not find it an adequate response to its own security problems and regional concerns, so Israel does not intend to become a signatory-state.
- The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) – Israel signed the CTBT and is cooperating in making its monitoring mechanism reliable.

That was the approach when there was still some hope that the peace process would positively change Israel's strategic environment and would eliminate some of the threats that it faces. The collapse of the Oslo Process after the failure of the Camp David summit in 2000 and the long years of bloody conflict with the Palestinians that followed, coupled with the war in Lebanon in the summer of 2006, have certainly hardened Israeli positions on arms control. First, there is a general feeling that threats to Israel have become more severe and therefore Israel cannot do anything that may hurt its strategic insurance policy. Second, there is a general lack of confidence in Israel's ability to deal with security threats in the traditional ways it dealt with them in the past. The less than satisfying performance of the Israeli Defense Force in the war in Lebanon contributed much to this feeling of insecurity. Third, there is great suspicion of the intentions of Israel's Arab neighbors. This results in suspicion that any agreement concluded with them, including arms control agreements, would probably be violated. The perception in Israel is that a number of Arab and Muslim Middle Eastern states (Iran, Libya, and Syria) that are signatories of the NPT violated the treaty and were engaged in covert nuclear weapon programs. Given these past violations, why would Israel sign a treaty that would deny it an essential security asset while giving its adversaries opportunities to cheat and gain a clear advantage?

More generally, there is no discourse on regional cooperation. A deep sense of disappointment in the peace process dominates the Israeli landscape and the public does not want any more illusions. Past statements by former Prime Minister and current President Shimon Peres about a "New Middle East" that would create cooperation among a variety of issues are being ridiculed. It is very difficult to sell ideas on cooperative security in this atmosphere; instead there is a growing tendency to take unilateral steps. Former Prime Minister Sharon's plan of unilateral disengagement from some of the Palestinian territories was one indication of this trend. Another indication was the Israeli decision following the receipt of reliable intelligence on the building of a secret plutonium production

reactor in Syria to destroy it instead of filing a complaint with the IAEA. In Israel, unilateral counter-proliferation reigns and cooperative non-proliferation is not trusted.

The end result is that although there are no declaratory changes in Israel's arms control policies and the sets of principles and premises listed by Ambassador Bentsur are still valid, they are considered to be a set of conditions that will not be fulfilled at any future date. Shelving the idea of becoming more engaged in arms control became easier because of the corresponding change in the US arms control stance. It is always easier for Israel to follow US policies. Under these circumstances, Israel expects no real pressure to change its arms control policies.

### **MOVING TO ZERO**

Following the early general elections that took place in Israel in February 2009, a new coalition government was formed by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. This coalition is composed mostly of right wing parties, and as such will probably adopt a tougher and more hawkish policy on security matters than the previous government. The change of government will make it less probable that Israel will be forthcoming towards a Global Zero initiative than it would be under a center-left government, which would inherently be more attentive to international initiatives.

In any event, a necessary condition for any Israeli government to respond positively to a zero nuclear weapons initiative is the adoption of such an initiative by the US administration. Israeli leaders would not pay attention to such an initiative if it were to come from other actors. Israeli leaders believe that the US would shoot down the initiative and Israel would not really have to deal with it. Israeli attention to the initiative would also be dependent on Israel's assessment of the seriousness of the US in pursuing the initiative: how determined it is and its willingness to put real pressure on Israel to implement the initiative. Israel faced down earlier US arms control initiatives that it did not like because the US was not serious enough. One example was President George H.W. Bush's Middle East arms control initiative that was announced in May 1991 after the first Gulf War in a speech made by Mr. Bush at the Air Force Academy. The initiative suggested a cut-off of fissile material production and elimination of ballistic missiles in the Middle East.<sup>32</sup> The proposal was opposed by Israel and others in the Middle East and faded away very quickly. At that time, the Bush Administration was not determined enough to make it happen and decided to withdraw the idea after it was met with negative responses in the Middle East. In the future, depending on US actions, Israeli leaders may assume that, although the US has adopted the vision of the global elimination of nuclear weapons, it

does not really intend to implement the idea in the hope that other actors will shoot it down.

Even if this pre-condition was fulfilled and the Israeli leadership became convinced that the US administration was serious, Israel would probably try to postpone its engagement in negotiations for a treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons by a specific date for as long as possible. Israelis are great believers in “slippery slope” theories, which is natural for a small state such as Israel. They believe that once Israel joins negotiations of this kind, it will face great difficulties in weathering pressure to make incremental concessions to its basic positions that will build up to a fundamental change in positions. Former Prime Minister Sharon used the metaphor of cattle in a slaughterhouse for such situations. The cattle are pushed towards fences that make the space around them gradually narrower and narrower until they face the knife of the meat packer.<sup>33</sup>

The main obstacles, which would have to be overcome before Israel could consider nuclear disarmament seriously, are Israel’s deep sense of insecurity (strengthened by recent events such as the war in Lebanon) and its mistrust of the effectiveness of global regimes in the specific Middle East regional environment. Assuming that the US and other nuclear powers adopted the idea of eliminating nuclear weapons globally and wished to convince Israel to cooperate with this idea, they will have to deal with these two important issues. The two issues are connected to the Middle East itself, and no out-of-region developments, including developments in Europe, could influence Israeli actions.

Israel would feel more secure if there was serious progress in the peace process and if significant steps were taken against the main challengers of the peace process—Iran and Syria—that also pose central threats to Israel’s security. If steps were taken to neutralize the Iranian threat, if Syria were taken out of the group of states that are in conflict with Israel, and if real progress towards a settlement with the Palestinians were achieved, the Israeli leadership would be much more open to arms control ideas, as it was during the first half of the 1990s. The US, as well as other world powers, would have to deal with these problems before approaching Israel with an initiative that Israel would perceive as a demand to give up its insurance policy against existential threats.

Assuming that it is unlikely for the Iranian, Syrian, and Palestinian conflicts all to be resolved in the next few years, other options for strengthening Israel’s self-confidence may be considered as a way of making Israel more open to nuclear disarmament ideas. One such idea that is already part of the discourse in Israel, albeit in limited circles, would be a proposal to offer Israel a formal defense

treaty with the US and/or membership in NATO. The purpose of such a proposal would be to offer Israel compensation for what it may deem a weakening of its ability to defend itself. These ideas are very controversial in Israel, and strong voices argue that the price Israel would have to pay for a defense treaty with the US or membership in NATO, in terms of loss of freedom of action and the damage to its indigenous defense capabilities, far surpass the advantages of these two ideas.<sup>34</sup> Given the strength of these concerns, it is doubtful that an offer of this kind would convince Israel to join a global zero initiative. It is more probable that if the government of Israel agreed to the idea of global zero because the previously mentioned conditions had been met, it would ask as a pre-condition for a package of steps that would shore up its security; and a defense treaty with the US or membership in NATO may be part of such a package. Israelis appreciate the contribution of the US and other allies to their security, but as an addition, not as a replacement for their own capabilities. The ethos of being able to defend itself plays a major role in the Israeli psyche.

In short, the US and its partners in a disarmament initiative will have to deal with the question of how to adapt the initiative to Middle Eastern realities. They may have to take steps to devise a regional monitoring and enforcement system that would be more strict and reliable than what may be needed in other regions. The Israelis maintain that international norms are not accepted as widely in the Middle East. For example, even when non-use of chemical weapons was an entrenched international norm, various actors in the Middle East made use of them anyway.<sup>††</sup> Additionally, more than one Middle Eastern nation has assumed that signing on to international treaties does not imply that they necessarily have to comply with them, as has been the case with several signatories of the NPT. From the point of view of Israel, arms control will have no real value without very strong regional mechanisms for verification and compliance. But even the inclusion of such mechanisms in a treaty would not be sufficient if there were no real determination to implement them. For example, there is disappointment in Israel about the way the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) is implemented. The Convention includes very strong monitoring mechanisms, such as challenge inspections, but they are not being utilized. There are strong suspicions in Israel that Iran, a signatory of the CWC, has not complied with its commitments and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the agency established for this purpose, is not using the strong enforcement instruments available in the CWC because of political reasons.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>††</sup> Egypt in Yemen (1963-1966), Iraq and Iran (1982-1988), Libya in Chad (1981).

Finally, Israel will make a strong connection between its approach toward a nuclear disarmament initiative and the positions of the other Middle Eastern states. That means that such an initiative would not be considered as long as other Middle Eastern states refused to accept it. Moreover, Israel would have a problem with a nuclear disarmament initiative if it were not also connected to the disarmament of chemical weapons, biological weapons, and ballistic missiles. Any progress towards nuclear disarmament would be conditional upon full acceptance by all Middle Eastern states.

### **END-STATES**

When push comes to shove and it becomes clear to Israel's leadership that Iran is not going to be prevented from acquiring nuclear weapons by international sanctions, dialogue, or preventive military attacks, either because there is no way of stopping the Iranian program or because the costs are too high, Israel will consider two possible ways of dealing with the new situation. The first is to live with a mutual balance of terror based on the threat of mutually assured destruction. That would compel Israel to make large investments to acquire credible second strike capabilities. Moreover, Israel would still be left with strong doubts about how reliable its nuclear deterrence could be in a multi-nuclear environment characterized by high levels of hostility to Israel. The second alternative is to look for a way to turn the Middle East into a nuclear-free zone, acknowledging that there are severe doubts concerning the implementation of such an agreement and concerns that giving up the nuclear insurance policy would create a situation in which it would be easier for Israel's adversaries to pose other threats to Israel. Currently, given the heightened security concerns of Israelis and high level of mistrust of the other parties in the Middle East, it seems that the choice would be to continue to depend on nuclear deterrence.

Israel is pre-occupied with its own security concerns, and its attitude is influenced more by the regional situation than by developments in the global arena. The damage to the global nuclear regime caused by a nuclear arms race in the Middle East would be of minor concern to Israel, and would not play an important role in the decisions of the Israeli leadership. Global norms are important to Israel as long as they inhibit nuclearization of the Middle East. If the Middle East proves to be a region in which global norms do not play a real role, then they are of no real concern to Israel. Israel is not really concerned about the possibility that a nuclear conflict in some other area would overflow to its region. The question of whether there would be 20 or 30 nuclear weapon states on the globe by 2025 is of little concern to Israel, as long as they are not Middle Eastern states hostile to Israel.

An interesting question arises about the relationship between conventional balances of forces and a nation's willingness to eliminate all nuclear weapons. In the Israeli case, the original motivation for the decision to build a nuclear option was the concern that a combined land invasion of Israel by its Arab adversaries would pose an existential threat to the state of Israel. In recent decades, this threat has subsided. On one hand, the relationship between Israel and many Arab states has changed, and the political situation in the Middle East has made the formation of an anti-Israeli Arab military coalition unlikely. On the other hand, Israel succeeded in building conventional military capabilities that surpass the capabilities of its potential adversaries. These developments may lead Israel to become more agreeable to ideas of nuclear disarmament. One may also argue that similar developments have occurred in the global arena; the largest powers will probably maintain their conventional weapons superiority in a world without nuclear weapons, and therefore be able to maintain some measure of world order. Israel, in contrast to India and some others, is not concerned by such a prospect. The largest powers are not threatening Israel and their ability to maintain some world order is a stabilizing factor that may contribute to the removal of existential threats to Israel.

Nevertheless, it is doubtful whether this kind of argument in favor of nuclear disarmament would make inroads in Israel. Israel's understanding is that the collapse of the Soviet Union did not lead to a new world order, but to a new world disorder. The international environment is now more anarchic than it used to be, and military superiority of the largest power is not sufficient to instill order in this chaos. The best example of this failure is the repercussions of the US attempt to reform the Middle East by use of force in Iraq.

Israelis also think that political environments can change, especially in the volatile Middle East, and there is no guarantee that Israeli conventional military superiority can be retained indefinitely. The Israelis had a sobering experience in the 2006 war in Lebanon, in which a ruthless adversary succeeded in bypassing Israel's military superiority by engaging in a war of terror against its citizens.

## **CONCLUSIONS**

In the current regional context, it will be extremely difficult to convince the government of Israel or the Israeli public that moving to zero nuclear weapons is good for Israel.

This may change if real steps are taken to change the regional environment and if this nuclear initiative is connected to complete chemical weapons, biological weapons, and ballistic missiles disarmament in the region. Israel would also have

to be convinced that an agreement on the global elimination of nuclear weapons would have effective regional monitoring and compliance mechanisms that would be utilized if violations take place. That will be something very difficult to sell to a suspicious Israeli audience.

The Israeli government would be in a difficult position if all the nuclear powers joined a disarmament initiative. In such a case there will be no nation Israel could hide behind to wait for the initiative to be shot down. In such a situation, it is difficult to make a credible forecast of Israel's capability to withstand the pressure of the great powers. What is quite certain is the fact that Israel would fight hard.

## ENDNOTES

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