



PAKISTAN'S DEFENCE IN THE CHANGED SOUTH ASIAN SCENARIO

Prof. Dr Sayeda Daud, Rizwana Jabeen

Department of International Relations, Federal Urdu University Karachi, Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

The month of May 1998, opened a new chapter in the history of South Asia. The test conducted by India totally destabilized the region. Sanity was restored after Pakistan's display of nuclear prowess. However, the strategic outlook had been irrevocably altered in a manner, where-by, two nuclear weapon states are facing each other across contiguous borders. Probably the Indian aim of the Pokhran II initiative was to confirm the development of a bomb design suited for deployment atop the Agni missile. The immediate decision to go ahead could have been spurred by the successful Pakistani test of Ghauri Missile. Another reason was the belief of Hindu leadership, that "nuclear weapons are a symbol of international power and prestige". There is, however, no doubt that the main reason for the Indian initiative was to further her hegemonic designs by acquiring and flaunting the capability. We must understand the multifarious changes associated with this development and carry out a reappraisal of Pakistan's security considerations. Today, we stand at a crossroads, the decisions taken now would shape our destiny. They would either secure the future of our generations or put them under the constant threat of a holocaust. The changed scenario has amplified existing national security issues such as internal strife in the form of regional and provincial disputes, acts of terrorism manifested in the form of religious and ethnic divides, economic constraints and lastly, the need for an immediate up-gradation of our conventional military hardware. The defence of the country from internal threats is as important as defence against an external aggressor. While considering security matters, vital national compulsions like Pakistan's support for the Kashmir cause, need to be accorded priority. Pakistan has been able to internationalize the issue. The changed scenario is well suited to keep up the pressure.

INDIAN DOMESTIC SITUATION

India's Dilemma. India is a country with an ethnically heterogeneous population having severe internal security problems. The homeland of over a billion people, it is a land of constant strife and discontent. This mega country defies all rules of cohesion, most prominent among them being religion and ethnicity. From Kashmir in the north, to Kanyakumari in the south and from Amritsar in the west to Assam in the east, its population is divided into numerous ethnic groups. National integration has become a major problem for the ruling elite. Nehru once said "My profession is to foster the unity of India". Congress under the Gandhi dynasty was able to ensure a semblance of unity, but with the degeneration of Congress, the splits are opening up. The prospect of national disintegration, collapse of democracy, social chaos and revolutionary violence has accompanied the process of progress in India from the time of Independence. As early as 1960, John Kenneth Galbraith described India as the world's only functioning anarchy. Political and Ethnic Divide, Political movements for autonomy and armed struggle for outright independence, have mushroomed in the North Eastern states of Assam, Mghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram. Organizations such as United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN), People's Revolutionary Party of Kanglecepek (PREPAK), Mizo National Front (MNF), Tripura National Volunteers (TNV), Gurkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), are all radical organizations with strong centrifugal tendencies. In the South, states like Tamil Nadu are becoming increasingly frustrated with the central government. While the center is aligned with the Sri Lankan authorities to ensure curtailment of spillover effects, the Tamil Nadu State supports its Tamil brethren and LTTE. In Punjab the Sikh separatist movement has been controlled to a certain extent, however, the Sikhs have not forgotten the intense battle that raged in the Golden Temple Complex where Bhindranwal died with 700 of his followers. They can also not forget the mass killings after the assassination of Indira Gandhi. Lastly, we come to Kashmir, which is the bleeding wound of India. The post 1990 scenario is of special concern because, it has taken the Kashmiri struggle for Independence to the point of no return where 55,000 lives have been laid down since 1990. The impetus for this movement was provided by the heroic struggle of Afghan mujahedeen. Rajiv Gandhi who, managed to sign peace accords with the Assamese, Mizos, Gurkhas, and Tripurians acknowledged that, 'Kashmiris have changed beyond recognition, they have lost fear, Kashmir is lost to us'.

Religious Fanaticism. Communalism, which right now is one of the most serious internal security problems in India, goes back a long way. V D Savarkar was preaching a Hindu Raj in India since 1917. Seeing the impact of religious politicism even Indira Gandhi started to openly appease the Hindu religious sentiments. Actions such as blessing of "Kalash Yatra", visit of temples and banning of calf

tallow, were meant to revive her image as a practicing loyal Hindu. She had realized that with massive Hindu majority in India, it was important to keep the Hindus firmly on her side. All these and many more factors are taking India to the brink of eminent anarchy." Religious activism and the rise in Hindu fundamentalism has gained new impetus, with the coming into power of Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP). Some aspects of this development have to be considered as follows: -

(a) BJP Leadership. BJP is top heavy with ultra-radical Hindus. It is the political arm of radical organizations such as Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP), Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Bajrang Dal. BJP leadership realises that taking a strong anti-Pakistan stand makes 'it look more in control of the situation.

(b) BJP's Manifesto. BJP's manifesto on Kashmir "Affirms unequivocally India's sovereignty over the whole of Jammu and Kashmir". Induction of nuclear weapons in her military has also been a part of her manifesto from the very beginning.

(c) Enhanced Credibility of BJP. It wants to enhance its credibility by following its manifesto. This is why the nuclear explosions were conducted and that is precisely the reason why a proactive stance on Kashmir was being advocated by its leadership.

INDIAN ATTEMPTS AT HEGEMONY

Historical Backdrop. Hegemonistic ambitions of India became obvious at the outset. Five hundred states disappeared from the map of India within three years of independence. Some were taken over by persuasion, some by political arm-twisting and finally some like Hyderabad and Junagadh were subjugated by raw brutal force. This process continued, Goa, Daman and Diu were annexed in 1962 and Sikkim in 1975. Hence, India is the only country in the post-World War II era which together with Israel has the dubious distinction of annexing land. In furtherance of her hegemonic designs, India continues to pressurize her neighbours, through a combination of hard diplomacy and ready gun power. The invasion of East Pakistan (1971), para drops in Sri Lanka (1987), air dash of Indian troops to Maldives (1988), economic blockade of Nepal (1989) and wars with Pakistan (1948, 65, 71), are manifestation of her designs.

Ideology. Hindus have not accepted the partition of Mother India and efforts are being made to reunite pre-partition India. Their strategists realize that glorification of India is the means by which hegemonic designs can be justified. For example, Subrahmanyam says that the "Indian role is not of a middle power, her size and population rule that out. In the next two or three decades, it should become a major power or else break-up due to external pressures". Even Nehru who was projected as a champion of non-violence said, "The real strength of a country develops by industrial growth, which implies the capacity to make weapons of war."

Nuclear Explosions. Indian Hegemonistic mentality ensured that, immediately after coming to power, the BJP moved on the path of fulfilling its manifesto. Thus five devices were detonated as an article of faith, regardless of external pressure. The extent of militaristic Hinduism can be gauged from the fact that radioactive sand from Pokhran is being distributed as a deity and is being worshipped.

Statements of Important Officials. After Pokhran-II, Indian politicians immediately went on the path of chauvinistic chest pounding. Mr L K Advani took the initiative, by warning Pakistan to give up her stand on the Kashmir issue and added that now the issue would be solved by New Delhi in the light of nuclear capability. Later, he even warned of a proactive approach, which resulted in a strong reaction by the Pakistan government and the international community. In the same context Mr Murli Manohar Joshi said, "People will now realize that India is a strong nation and cannot be taken lightly,"

CONSEQUENCES OF AN ARMS RACE

India conducted the nuclear explosions on the false pretext of necessity, whereas Pakistan conducted her tests to regain military equilibrium. India did not gain any leverage from this misadventure on the military and economic fronts. Political gains by the ruling party have also been totally nullified, as was proven in the subsequent state elections in India. Pakistan, on the other hand has gained on the military and political fronts. Militarily, Pakistan now has a proven nuclear deterrence and politically the Kashmir cause has gained new urgency and has been internationalized. Any attempt at an arms race however, is fraught with negative fallouts as follows:

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(a) Economic Consequences. An arms race is detrimental to both countries. Now that the weapons are a reality, all the associated factors, like ensuring the enhancement and securing the existing potential, is going to impose on both countries an unacceptable drain on the already meagre resources. India had the initiative in the events of May 1998. She selected the time for the explosions, after putting her house in order. However, Pakistan had to follow suit by compulsion, even though her economy was more brittle.

(b) Political Consequences. The adverse consequences of the Indian and Pakistani explosions were realized by the saner elements in India. Chidambaram, while, speaking in the Indian Lok Sabha, remarked that there was a difference between having a nuclear option and flaunting the capability. He said that the vital difference has manifested itself as the escalation of tension in the region and conversion of cross border hostility into a nuclear arms race. To carry out the explosions was in line with the non-adherence to nuclear apartheid as practiced by the P-5, but what followed was uninhibited jingoism and even war hysteria.'

(c) Military Consequences. What we must remember, is that the animosity between the two states is deep rooted. This fact is reinforced, by the tacit signaling during India's Exercise Brasstacks in 1987 and escalation of the Kashmiri uprising in 1990. The fact of the matter, is that India did give Pakistan the opportunity to test her hitherto un-tested ability and cement her deterrence capability. Pakistan retaliatory tests and counter accusations were consequential, rather than a vindication of India's nuclear position. Referring to the matter of nuclear arms race in South Asia, Paul Leventhal, President of the Washington based Nuclear Control Institute, said that, "Both India and Pakistan are on a slippery slope. One could see a replay of 1962, when the USA and Soviet Union came within a hair's breadth of nuclear war. If Kashmir becomes today's Cuba, the blame would squarely be with India for initiating this no win situation". Given a choice, Pakistan's preference would be for nuclear stabilization at the lowest possible levels. But, if India continues to weaponized and deploy nuclear-tipped missiles, Pakistan would in all likelihood be compelled to match India. In fact, the security considerations for Pakistan had taken a serious turn month before the Pokhran II tests, with the deployment of nuclear capable SSMs Prithvi .

PAKISTAN'S COMPULSIONS ON THE KASHMIR ISSUE

Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir issue is fundamental, since it cannot back track on the basic demand of allowing the Kashmiri's the right of self-determination. The Pakistani cause gains impetus from the fact, that it was India and not Pakistan that took the Kashmir question to the United Nations. In 1994, James Woolsey, head of the CIA, assessing the Indo-Pak situation said, "Perhaps, Kashmir had the most probable prospect for future use of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons". In October 1995, the British Labour Party in a resolution, had described Kashmir as an international flash point that had the potentials of an atomic conflagration.

Historical Compulsions. The criteria of partition in 1947 gave the people of Kashmir the right of self-determination. This right has been negated far too long. The radical Hindu sentiments do not see it as a problem, what to talk of a problem with regional and global implications. It is however, a fact that saner elements even in India have accepted the fact that peace in the region would not be possible without solving the Kashmir issue. For example, BR Subramanian says, "We cannot claim that Kashmir is not an international dispute. It is after all a problem between two different nations. We should not allow it to drift or else we would continue to pay the price of partition in perpetuity". He said that Nehru had wanted to solve the issue during his lifetime, however, his death put paid to the efforts.

Geographical Importance. Kashmir's importance cannot be over emphasized. It is the fountain from which the lifeblood of Pakistan flows in the form of rivers Jhelum and Chenab. These rivers not only have economic importance, but hold major military significance also. Unfettered control of the rivers

would give the Indians, the ability to choke or inundate our waterways for major strategic gains. Kashmir is also Pakistan's most vital link with China. In the event of a naval blockade of our SLOC's this remains the only secure link for inflow of vital supplies. Karakorum Highway can also be linked with Central Asian States for trade. Another factor that comes into play, is the unclear demarcation of the borders of Kashmir. If the Kashmir scenario is solved in line with the wishes of India, it would start laying claim to Gilgit and Baltistan. Hence, there is no alternate to a firm and uncompromising stance on the Kashmir issue.

Moral Compulsions. Pakistan's compulsions on the Kashmir issue stem from the justification of the cause and the thousands of lives already sacrificed for the struggle. The Indian contention is that Pakistan trains, funds, equips and sends militants from across the LOG, whereas, Pakistan provides only political, diplomatic and moral support for the freedom struggle. Pakistan's nuclear response has ensured that the Indian bellicose stance on Kashmir is stifled and the situation of mutual deterrence is established behind which, Pakistani support continues to the freedom fighters.

SECURITY CONSIDERATIONS FOR PAKISTAN

With the introduction of the nuclear factor, Pakistan's security considerations have multiplied. The situation in South Asia has become increasingly volatile which requires a reappraisal. The expected low intensity conflict scenario does not reduce the threat; it only changes the mode of conflict. Aside from the military threat, we must also consider other factors effecting security.

Global Considerations. The changed South Asian scenario has serious global implications for Pakistan. USA's stance to equate the Indian and Pakistani position on all matters is a source of concern for Pakistan. Philip Richeson said, "For Pakistan the end of cold war and the lack of superpower involvement in Afghanistan has resulted in a quiet revolution in which Washington is distancing itself from Islamabad". This fact was accentuated after the crises of May 1998, where the emphasis of United States was not to penalize India or provide an iron clad security umbrella to Pakistan, but it was only to restrict Pakistan from a parallel response. Pakistan's, nuclear program has always been seen by the West as a danger to international peace and security (Islamic bomb syndrome). This approach was clearly expressed by Dr Henry Kissinger, when he told Mr. Z A Bhutto that the West would "Make a horrible example of Pakistan, if it detonated a bomb." USA left Pakistan out in the cold after the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan. Nevertheless, Pakistan also failed to exploit the situation, when it was unable to make inroads in the Central Asian Republics on the basis of common bonds of religion, after the breakup of USSR. The reason being, their support for the northern alliances of Afghanistan in collaboration with India, making Pakistan an adversary for its alleged support to the Taliban. Pakistan's relations with Iran are also at an all-time low due to the Afghanistan situation and internal shia, sunni problem.

Political Considerations. The political divides in the country have taken the shape of deep-rooted animosities. Ethnic divisions are becoming strong and law and order situation is unsatisfactory. There is corruption in politics and issues like deprivation of rights, injustices by other provinces and religious polarization, are on the rise. India has embarked upon an active proxy war on Pakistan, on the ideological, political and religious fronts: -

(a) Proxy War. Covert actions are deniable. These acts of terrorism not only drain the economy, but the psychological impact of a sustained terrorist campaign cannot be over emphasized. This was seen during the 1980's, when the Afghan intelligence agency KHAD (later WAD) was active in the NWFP. The Indian intelligence agency RAW, is actively engaged in this mode of undeclared war with Pakistan.

(b) Political and Ethic Polarization. Today we see this polarization in the hate Punjabi syndrome, the Shia Sunni animosity, the Sindhu Desh and Pakhtunkhwa phenomena and the Muhajir factor in urban Sindh. Although, to date, regional nationalism has spawned terrorism on a limited scale, there is no guarantee that the followers of different factions will tend to co-exist when their individual interests are compromised. An example of souring volatile sentiments was seen on the issue of Kalabagh dam.

(c) Sectarian and Religious Polarization. Sectarian sentiments flared up, during President Zia's attempts of Islamisation. Collection of Zakat and implementation of Sharia were the igniters. Subsequently, armed groups emerged to assert their interpretation of Islam. This led to the formation of foreign funded militant organizations such as Lashkar-e- Jhangvi and Sipha-e-Mohammad, leading to a never-ending cycle of assassinations and counter assassinations. There are sharp divisions within the Sunni sect also, like the Deobandi, Bareilvi and Ahle-Hadith. The situation was further aggravated due to the mushrooming of Madrassas. Currently, there are over 2500 Madrassas in Punjab alone, of these over 750 have been clearly identified as being responsible in fueling sectarianism. The Deobandi Madrassas in Pakistan are the original recruiting grounds for the Taliban Movement in Afghanistan. Only time will tell, whether the Taliban genie will rebound on Pakistani politics.

Economic Considerations. The Indian decision to conduct nuclear explosions may have had multi-dimensional aims. Firstly, these could be the ratification of Pakistan's untested claims and secondly, to involve it in an arms race, which would bring about an economic collapse. Pakistan is surviving better than expected, but the Indian ploy could have resulted in serve damage to the economic structure.

Military Considerations. The new strategic environment, which has come about, has expectedly changed the face of conflict. The concept of conventional war has been replaced by that of a low

intensity conflict (LIC) aiming to bleed the adversary dry. This can take many shapes including armed incursion into disputed territories, such as Kashmir. It must however be clearly understood, that the changed strategic environment, only lays down new rules of conflict and does not significantly reduce the threat if the national aims and objectives stay the same, including our stance on the Kashmir issue. This reality, does not give Pakistan the freedom to reduce her conventional forces unilaterally. The Indian strategy would be to start a low intensity conflict, limited to the internationally recognised disputed territory of Kashmir, while ensuring a neutral stance by the international community. The step by step escalation of LIC could materialize in the following manner; -

- (a) Political pressure would be mounted to portray Pakistan as a sponsor of terrorism/aggressor in Kashmir.
- (b). Active and passive air defence measures would be enhanced in Indian Held Kashmir.
- (c) Hot pursuit operations would be initiated against the Mujahidin with the help of attack helicopters.
- (d) So-called mujahidin training camps would be targeted by attack helicopters and heliborne assault.
- (e) Restricting the operations along LOG, land offensive may be launched across to capture vital areas in Azad Kashmir.
- (f) IAF would participate in all operations and fully support the land offensive.
- (g) Harassment operations against our merchant marine, could be carried out concurrently.

Nuclear Deterrence Vs Strong Conventional Defence. It is not prudent, to rely on nuclear deterrence alone. If non-weaponized deterrence could collapse so easily, so could weaponized deterrence. In the cold war era, there were over 100 false alarms between the erstwhile foes. Considering the hawkish sentiments between the leaderships of both India and Pakistan, escalation is a very real possibility in our scenario. The pre-May undeclared status, accorded some deterrence without the associated cost of a nuclear arms race. The importance of maintaining a strong conventional defence, is nonetheless paramount, primarily to enhance the nuclear threshold and also to cater for the projected LIC. Therefore, in the changed South Asian scenario, both conventional defence and the nuclear weapons program would have to progress in parallel.

PAKISTAN'S RESPONSE TO INDIAN HEGEMONIC DESIGNS

Political Response. India's attempt to barge into the nuclear club did not materialize. In fact, India has fewer friends now and she has been condemned in the Security Council after 33 years. After the explosion, instead of being promoted to the global penthouse, she has been relegated to the doghouse.³¹ The irresponsible observations made by senior Indian ministers like George Fernanda's

and L K. Advani have only served to dilute the credibility of Indian diplomatic claims that the nuclear tests were just a matter of sharpening Indian strategic capabilities. In the changed scenario, Pakistan must pressurize for adherence to the UN resolution. This must be done with full vigor on the grounds that, in addition to the historical justification of legitimacy, this issue has driven both disputants to acquire nuclear weapons and there is a palpable "threat to International peace and security". Article 39 of the Charter binds the UN to intervene when there is such a threat. Pakistani leadership, must rise above limiting itself to response of, Indian jingoism and should be ready to take initiatives involving the P-5. Our security strategy should be based on our own national imperatives rather than always endeavoring to blunt the Indian initiative.

Response to UN Efforts. Pakistan must endeavour to portray India as a hurdle to peace in South Asia. India scored negatively once it advised United Nations not to meddle in India Pakistan relations. This was in response to UN Secretary General Kofi Anan's intention of sending a special envoy to the two countries to discuss outstanding matters including the Kashmir issue.

Internationalization of Kashmir Issue. As a result of the May 1998 crisis, Pakistan has been able to internationalize the Kashmir dispute. Now it has new takers for the argument that, if international mediation is not forthcoming, Kashmir has the ability to become a dangerous trigger for a nuclear conflict. On the front of bilateral negotiations, Pakistan must have an open approach. Separate working groups can be formed including one of the working groups negotiating the Kashmir issue and the progress of peripheral issues can be made hostage to advancement on the Kashmir issue. The icing on the cake for the Pakistan in this situation, would be third party mediation if possible. Countries like USA, Great Britain and Iran which were non-committal earlier, may agree to act as mediators.

Response to Insurgency and Religious Fanaticism. The countering of terrorism is a must, if Pakistan does not want to become a hostage to anarchy. One method is General Babar's way, which though effective is unethical and not long lasting to say the least. The important thing is that the forces countering terrorism, have to be superior in training, organization and motivation. Anti-terrorist operations have to be launched on a two pronged approach i.e. redress of grievances and enforcing the writ of law. Until and unless the trigger or incentive of terrorism is removed, there would be willing replacements of the one's that are eliminated by force. At present it is an easy affair for RAW, but when the indigenous supply of terrorists is cut off, it would make their job difficult. However, we should remember that while the grievances of the masses are to be redressed, terrorism must be countered with an iron hand. To counter religious and sectarian terrorism would be much more difficult, as the people involved are not doing it for political or monetary gains. Rather, their involvement is an article of faith. Hardened criminals carrying out acts of terrorism under the guise

of religion must be dealt with severely. However, the religious divide can only be bridged by dialogue.

Military Response. Pakistan's military response to the changed South Asian scenario has to be pragmatic and it must be ensured that it stays within the confines of practicality. The aim should be to enhance conventional defence, which in turn would increase our nuclear threshold. The timing and situations, which would determine a nuclear response, is a matter, which is quite unclear. Would the nuclear option be exercised once the enemy strikes our nuclear facilities? Would it be exercised, if there is a limited use of battlefield (tactical) nuclear weapons by the enemy? Would it be exercised on military concentrations or would it be a war of cities? These and many other questions need to be answered. The obvious advantage however, is that declared nuclear capability, ensures a credible deterrent forcing India to respect our nuclear threshold. This would restrict future confrontations to low intensity conflicts and more so the proxy wars.

Nuclear Deterrence. Nuclear capability, unlike capability in terms of conventional weapons, is not purely a numbers game. In the Cuban missile crises of 1962, USA possessed about 4000 strategic nuclear warheads. The Soviet Union had approximately 200, but at no time President Kennedy threatened the Soviet Union with the use of nuclear weapons. Similarly, Pakistan must not get into the numbers game with India. It should instead, focus on the second strike capability. A limited capability already exists with Pakistan. The Ghauri and Shaheen missiles are solid propellant rockets mounted on mobile launchers, which can be kept on the move and also be made ready for immediate launch. Pakistan recognizes the limits of her threshold and the same must be communicated to India in crystal clear terms. The no go regime has to be absolutely apparent to the enemy, beyond which it must be ready to face a nuclear response. Only then would the deterrent be effective. However, as far as the nuclear capability is concerned, Pakistan cannot and must not agree to a non-first use regime.

Nuclear Response. Our Nuclear Doctrine must enunciate the principles, rules and instructions for the employment or non-employment of nuclear weapons and also spell-out the conditions for exercising the first strike option. The Chief Executive must be the sole person to authorize the nuclear option. In order to avert the possibility of nuclear holocaust, even when it becomes inevitable, a graduated approach may be followed.

Scope of Indigenization. Pakistan must make progress in the field of indigenization. Although our weak industrial base and lack of true R&D limits our ability, the Private sector in Pakistan has the potential to do wonders if properly utilized. Our motto must be 'Make some buy some'. As such we should make a head start with spares production which shall ultimately lead to complete unit production, similar to the policy adopted by the automobile industry. The long-term strategy must

be based on phased building of an elaborate infrastructure in the private sector. Valid incentives must be provided at the earliest if the long-term goal of becoming commercially viable has to be achieved. This aim is achievable, countries like South Africa, Brazil, Israel and North Korea are clear examples. The existing achievements of public sector industries such as KRL, PEC, PAF Kamra, DESTO, SUPARCO and Air Weapon Complex are no doubt commendable. However, duplication and underutilization of assets must be avoided. Despite this drawback, a positive trend is developing in the indigenous production of defence related equipment.

CONCLUSION

The South Asian region has never enjoyed peace and harmony, which is a catalyst for industrial growth and overall progress. The causes for this constant state of animosity are well identified and crystallized. The most prominent reason for hostilities in the region is the Kashmir Issue. Secondly, the hegemonic designs of India constitute a patent threat to Pakistan's security. This is so, because Pakistan is the only country in South Asia, which defies Indian hegemony. India is faced with severe internal security predicaments; hence Pakistan always figures as a common enemy in the hope of forging unity. The Indian nuclear explosions and bellicose stance of her leadership, actively support this argument. The post May 1998 situation has vastly changed the security considerations for Pakistan. With proven nuclear deterrence, the threat of large-scale military confrontation has reduced, giving way to increased probability of low intensity conflicts and proxy wars. However, this does not accord us the freedom to reduce conventional military forces.

Pakistan must, endeavour to bring India on the negotiating table. Both must engage constructively to defuse tension and devise a structure of deterrence at the non-deployed levels of nuclear capability. This undertaking would inject a time-buffer and help in escalation control. A one liner in the June 1998 issue of the 'Economist sums up the changed South Asian scenario. It says "what has been tested can be detested but cannot be de-tested". State of economies of both India and Pakistan do not permit an arms race let alone a nuclear arms race. However, till the time that India does not show willingness to face the ground realities, Pakistan would have to take all necessary measures to safeguard her vital interests. Pakistan's response to Pokhran II was forthright and justified because we could not allow our national security and territorial integrity to be compromised.

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