

THE INDIAN DOCTRINAL APPROACH TO NUCLEAR WEAPONS

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Introduction

The reality of nations possessing nuclear weapons, whatever their reason to do so, gave rise to a new lexicon of strategic terms and introduced some new factors in their security calculus. The sheer scale of instantaneous death and destruction capable of being visited by a nuclear weapon meant that hostilities could no longer be used to prove the efficacy of new methods of warfare or the notion of nuclear deterrence. Further, because the effects of a nuclear conflict were too serious, it readily became the domain of work by economists, mathematicians and game theorists.¹ Given the scale of destruction a nuclear weapon could unleash, many nations did not seem too hesitant in seeking to possess one. The principal reason for the growing desire in the world for nuclear weapons is the search for security and to enforce the right to equal security for states that

supposedly enjoy equal sovereignty.² The 'stability' of the Cold War is often quoted by strategists on both sides of the fence—those who believed that stability was achieved between two superpowers and those who would argue that beneath the superficial layer of stability raged an unstable geopolitical struggle centred on violent themes. This, therefore, gave rise to the concept of the stability-instability paradox, suggesting that the stability introduced by nuclear weapons through mutual deterrence at the strategic level will open up the possibility of use of force at the lower level and thus create instability.³

Nuclear weapons can deter but cannot defend, thus the central problem of nuclear weapon use is that consequences of failure are not acceptable.⁴ This weighs heavily on the security calculus of nations as they deal with the existence of nuclear weapons in their own arsenals or in those of their

¹Karnad, Bharat. "South Asia: The Irrelevance of Classical Deterrence Theory." In *The India Pakistan Nuclear Relationship*, edited by E Sridharan, Delhi: Routledge, 2007. p83-128.

²—. *India's Nuclear Policy*. New Delhi: Pentagon Press, 2008. p7.

³Sahni, Varun. "The Stability - Instability Paradox: A Less Than Perfect Explanation." In *The India Pakistan Nuclear Relationship*, edited by E Sridharan, New Delhi: Routledge, 2007. p185-207.

⁴Raman, Sudha. *Nuclear Strategy: The Doctrine of Just War*. p-13. New Delhi: Manas Publications, 2006.

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neighbours. Existing and historic tensions between neighbouring nations may lead one or more states to reconsider the value of developing nuclear weapons and capabilities. As general insecurities transform into systemic rivalries, a state could consider nuclear capabilities a way to get the strategic upper hand or balance the larger nuclear neighbour.⁵

India's Nuclear Journey

The self-declaration of India as a nuclear weapon state in 1998 had a significant effect on the foreign policy outlook of the country. This manifested itself in three distinct ways: the foreign policy stance changed from the normative to the pragmatic; a shift in strategic thinking away from collective security to balance of power; and a departure from the long-held notion of disarmament to a more pragmatic approach to arms control.⁶ This paradigm shift after nuclear tests should come as no surprise given the effect of nuclear weapons on strategic

and geopolitical considerations. The world has slowly come to accept that nuclear weapons in India's security calculus are a reality. India has, one could aver, taken necessary efforts to express unambiguously that its nuclear weapon capability only adds to the nation's realisation of its regional responsibility, mindful always of its international obligations. The central philosophy remains that these are weapons of self-defence, which in turn ensures that India is not subjected to nuclear threats or coercion.⁷ It would seem a bit of a dichotomy that the basic tenet of Indian foreign policy remains aligned to the conviction that elimination of nuclear weapons globally will do more to enhance national security as well as stabilise the global security framework.

The early days of the nuclear debate (even as far back as the 1950s) did have a holistic view of how nuclear weapons would affect the framework of Indian security perspectives and aspirations. The enduring narrative in those days

⁵Campbell, Kurt M. "Reconsidering a Nuclear Future: Why Countries Might Cross Over to the Other Side." In *The Nuclear Tipping Point: Why States Reconsider their Nuclear Choices*, edited by Kurt M Campbell, Robert J Einhorn and Mitchell B Reiss, Washington DC: Brookings Institution Press, 2004. p18-32.

⁶Lodgaard, Sverre. *Nuclear Disarmament and Non Proliferation: Towards a Nuclear Weapon Free World?* New York, USA: Routledge, 2011.

⁷PIB, GoI. "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy." Press Information Bureau, GoI. 1998. <http://pib.nic.in/> (accessed August 24, 2014).

largely revolved around whether India should go nuclear and was not focused on what India should do with nuclear weapons. Decades later in the 1980s, some Indian strategists, mainly K. Subrahmanyam⁸ and General K. Sundarji,⁹ wrote about the role of nuclear weapons in the Indian context. These early writings, perhaps coincidentally, came at a time when policymakers were also attending to similar questions.¹⁰ The early thought processes were based on the premise that large dispersed nuclear arsenals, as were in vogue during the Cold War, were unnecessary and wasteful, especially so for a nation just emerging on the world stage. The belief was that the tenets of nuclear deterrence were unchanged and remained effective irrespective of the size of the arsenal.

There is no debate that the development of nuclear technology, especially the weapons programme, permanently altered the fabric of global security. The principal rallying point of India's nuclear policy has been that a

nuclear weapon-free world would enhance not only India's security but the security of all nations. India has categorically stated that in the absence of universal and non-discriminatory disarmament, the country cannot accept a regime that creates a division between nuclear 'haves' and 'have-nots'.¹¹ This belief reinforces the inalienable sovereign right of every nation to make an individual call regarding national security interests as an exercise of sovereign choice. The underlying reason that such a posture, albeit unarticulated, was adopted was to prevent a nuclear arms race in the region. The country was intent on ensuring that conventional superiority would continue to be of great significance in establishing a security framework. The absence of articulation also had the advantages of keeping the non-proliferation agenda at bay and allowing the country to continue to advance technological capability for nuclear weapons, missiles and other platforms without undue controversy and cost in terms of sanctions.¹²

⁸Prominent strategic affairs analyst and proponent of Realpolitik, b.1929 – d.2011

⁹Chief of Indian Army Staff from 1986-88, b.1930 – d.1999

¹⁰Rajagopalan, Rajesh. "India's Nuclear Policy." *NIDS International Symposium on Security Affairs*. Tokyo, Japan: National Institute of Defence Studies, Japan, November 2009. p95-111.

¹¹PIB, GoI. "Evolution of India's Nuclear Policy." *Press Information Bureau, GoI*. 1998. <http://pib.nic.in/> (accessed August 24, 2014).

¹²Ahmed, Ali. *Reconciling Doctrines: Prerequisite for Peace in South Asia*. *IDSIA Monograph Series No.3*, New Delhi: Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, September 2010.

India's Nuclear Doctrine

A draft nuclear doctrine was made public in 1999 and subsequently, in January 2003, a brief official nuclear doctrine was articulated, with the following significant features:¹³

- Building and maintaining a credible minimum deterrent.
- A posture of 'No First Use' (NFU)—nuclear weapons only used in retaliation against a nuclear attack on Indian territory or Indian forces anywhere.
- Nuclear retaliation to a first strike will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage.
- The civilian political leadership through the Nuclear Command Authority can only authorise nuclear retaliatory attacks.
- Non-use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear weapon states.
- In the event of a major attack against India, or Indian forces anywhere, by

biological or chemical weapons, India will retain the option of retaliating with nuclear weapons.

- A continuance of strict controls on export of nuclear and missile-related materials and technologies, participation in the Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) negotiations, and continued observance of the moratorium on nuclear tests.
- Continued commitment to the goal of a nuclear weapon-free world, through global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament.

The articulation of national policy brings with it attendant debates in strategic circles, even if official inputs remain scarce. The Indian nuclear doctrine has been examined threadbare by nuclear analysts across the complete spectrum of beliefs ranging from 'rejectionists', 'pragmatists', and 'maximalists'.¹⁴ Almost all seem to agree that nuclear issues could have been better articulated in the doctrine. One of the main observations has been whether the doctrine should have

¹³Hussain, Rifaat. "Deterrence and Nuclear Use: Doctrines in South Asia." In *The India Pakistan Nuclear Relationship*, edited by E Sridharan, 151-184. New delhi: Routledge, 2007.

¹⁴Alam, Mohammed B. *India's Nuclear Doctrine: Context and Constraints*. Working Paper No. 11, South Asia Institute, Department of Political Science, University of Heidelberg, October 2002.

stated clearly its continued belief in the central nature of ‘non-proliferation’ in our context or should have alternately stated that ‘deterrence’ remains the ideal framework for the security construct. It is always a possibility that analysts will come to differing interpretations on the philosophy, intent and application of the nuclear doctrine. Most analysts may come to eventually agree that India’s articulation of nuclear weapons as a means of deterrence only against nuclear weapon states indicates clearly the reluctance to develop and deploy nuclear weapons.

The manner in which India views the region and the security dilemmas that emerge from it will be the prime drivers of the narrative that surrounds nuclear weapons and their deployment. Notwithstanding the volatility of the security environment in the Indian context, with sub-conventional warfare affecting national economy, prosperity and way of life, the restrained approach to the use of nuclear deterrence has been a constant over the past few decades. Abundant caution has been exercised to prevent nuclear rhetoric from overtaking

security considerations in the subcontinent. India’s nuclear doctrine categorically affirms the country’s belief that its security would be enhanced, not diminished, in a world free of nuclear weapons. The elements of pride and prestige are secondary as they always are in the complex basket of elements that influence the strategic choices countries make.¹⁵

Nuclear Stability in South Asia

The focus on South Asian nuclear politics (and strategy) has become more intense and energetic since 1998 when both India and Pakistan carried out nuclear tests. In any security environment, one seeks to understand aspects of strategic stability. And in South Asia today, there is an added element of stability (still under debate) between nuclear-armed neighbours. Analysts tend to disagree about the level of nuclear risk in the region, ranging from declaring the region stable to predicting South Asia as the nuclear flashpoint that will destabilise world security. There are serious doubts in the region on the utility of nuclear weapons in a conflict and whether the weapons themselves are to

¹⁵Saran, Shyam. “Is India’s Nuclear Deterrent Credible?” *India Habitat Centre*. New Delhi, 24 April 2013.

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be under the control of political elements. To some, in today's given context the nuclear security balance can best be described as somewhat precarious, and any loss of stability in the political setup (especially relevant to Pakistan) is bound to raise concerns over the safety of the nuclear arsenal.¹⁶ What makes the nuclear stability scenario in South Asia unique are the elements of geography, proximity of adversaries, intensity of the hostility between neighbours, civil-military relations, nature of command and control in the countries and safety mechanisms or the lack thereof.¹⁷

The South Asian nuclear issue has been looked at from a number of theoretical perspectives. The view of the proliferation alarmists is that the situation is precarious as proliferation automatically leads to a manifestation of greater nuclear risk. The other perspective is provided by the deterrence optimists stating that, as in the case of other nuclear powers,

deterrence stability will emerge in South Asia. Deterrence pessimists would say that in the South Asian context, deterrence would not apply to the advantage of any nation. Perhaps there are enough acceptable reasons to support the stances of both deterrence optimists and pessimists.¹⁸ There is also a general analytical error, which is the failure to understand that the South Asian security situation cannot be compared to the traditional security environment of the Cold War era, between the NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Amplifying some aspects that have been introduced as peculiarities of the South Asian security domain, some key characteristics of this environment that have influenced the doctrinal development of both India and Pakistan are:-¹⁹

- Unlike the US and USSR, India and Pakistan share common borders, have fought three major wars and some minor border skirmishes, and have unresolved territorial disputes.

¹⁶Chansoria, Monika. "Nuclear Stability in Asia: Trends and Nuclear Risks for the Subcontinent." *New Delhi: Centre for Land Warfare Studies*, 10 March 2011.

¹⁷Rajagopalan, Rajesh. *Second Strike: Arguments about Nuclear War in South Asia*. p130. New Delhi: Penguin Books India, 2005.

¹⁸Koithara, Verghese. *Coercion and Risk taking in Nuclear South Asia*. CISAC Working Paper, International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers, March 2003.

¹⁹Salik, Naeem. "The Evolution of Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine." *In Nuclear Learning: The Next Decade in South Asia*, p71-84. Naval Post Graduate School, June 2014.

- Both India and Pakistan share common borders with China, another nuclear armed state. This triangular security environment would become more complicated if Iran acquires nuclear weapons.
- There is considerable disparity in terms of area, size of population, resource base and the size of conventional as well as nuclear forces.
- The command, control, communications and intelligence infrastructure will remain susceptible to the threat of a decapitating strike given the fact that the two capitals as well as other major cities and key bases and installations are within reach of either side's land-based missiles and aircraft. This vulnerability can be very destabilising, especially during periods of heightened tensions, and may give rise to pre-emptive tendencies.

While there are reasons to believe that the South Asian region differs in many ways from other regions where nuclear stability has played out successfully, many analysts aver after closer scrutiny that the South Asian nuclear

scenario is not too qualitatively different from other parts of the world.²⁰ In fact, if numbers are any indication of nuclear instability, the South Asian region has only a fraction of the amount of nuclear weapons in Europe or America. There could, therefore, be a strong case to consider that a committed approach to global nuclear disarmament, as opposed to arms control within a region, may actually be the way to achieve stability in the region. However, in the current context and considering the adversarial postures of countries in the region, this appears to be an unviable option.

The South Asian Situation

The situation in South Asia with the introduction of nuclear weapons may be unique, but analysts have noticed that India and Pakistan created much of their own nuclear lexicon based on the standard deterrence thinking of the Cold War with emphasis on concepts such as 'Massive Retaliation', 'Second Strike Capability' and 'Nuclear Triad'. One wonders whether there are reasons to conclude that the adoption of such concepts drawn unthinkingly from an

²⁰Nayan, Rajiv. "Does Nuclear Asia have its own Dangers?" *Institute of Defence Studies and Analysis*. 28 March 2014. <http://idsa.in/idsacomments/> (accessed September 11, 2014).

unfamiliar context and era that produced many thousands of nuclear weapons may actually weaken the very foundation of ‘credibility’ that is the centrepiece of the strategy of minimum deterrence.²¹

A cursory examination of the realities of recent nuclear standoffs will show that between nuclear powers, the state with even a small arsenal has been able to achieve the required levels of deterrence without any explicit posturing and issue of threats. This, in fact, goes contrary to the South Asian interpretation of nuclear deterrence based on the borrowed tenets of a standard nuclear doctrine that seems to encourage expansion of national nuclear arsenals.

The rapid acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan, in fact, creates a paradigm for other aspirant powers to follow more overt strategies and adopt forward postures. Even if one looks at the nuclear situation between India and Pakistan, it is clear that the relative security afforded to Pakistan by its nuclear capability, which deters a powerful Indian

military from any response or adventurism, has allowed a creative application of the ‘stability-instability paradox’ in Kashmir by transforming the possibility of a conventional war in the nuclear shadow into sub-conventional action.²² In this scenario, it is commonly said that Pakistan has been able to expand the conflict zone between convention and nuclear warfare to insert sub-conventional elements and it is the effort of Indian strategists to close this gap using conventional military means—given that the NFU pledge prevents direct application of nuclear weapons power. This manoeuvring in the strategic space is seen as causing deterrence instability, which is likely to persist for some time to come.

The absence of any progress with regard to issues of nuclear proliferation or even conventional arms control in South Asia coupled with the growing interest of weapon exporting nations in the region as a growing market for conventional weapons has created new risks for the stability paradigm. In this context, there are at least three sources of instability in the current South Asian

²¹Basrur, Rajesh M. “Nuclear Weapons and India Pakistan Relations.” *Strategic Analysis*, 2009, 33:3: p336-344.

²²*ibid.*

situation that are often overlooked in discussions of the region:²³

- A difference in perception between Indian and Pakistani elites regarding the risk of war.
- A difference between Indian and Pakistani expectations of how a war would unfold.
- The incentive that Indian war plans offer for Pakistan to deploy ballistic missiles, which are generally agreed to be a threat to stability.

Thus, the South Asian nuclear scenario has given much fodder to analysts and strategists who deliver predictions ranging anywhere between imminent nuclear exchange to an understanding of stability in a new paradigm. The future will determine how events play out in the nuclear arena, but western nuclear analysts can be faulted for not giving credibility to indigenous strategic understanding in South Asian political and military minds that allows the use of nuclear weapons in creative ways. The reality of nuclear weapons

and nuclear stability in South Asia (with or without its paradoxical elements) is one that is here to stay. What remains to be done by the nuclear establishments of India and Pakistan is the projection of an individual security calculus to the regional environment and the assumption of responsibility for the manner in which their stance affects it.

The NFU Security Paradigm

In the face of a ‘nuclear’ charged neighbourhood, India's strategic doctrine seems to be poised uncertainly between deterrence and compellence; comprising deterrence at the sub-conventional level, an offensive conventional doctrine and a nuclear doctrine of ‘massive’ punitive retaliation.²⁴ It could be argued that in the circumstances as they stand today, this may well have the potential to escalate insecurity. The ambiguous posture is also considered to provide strategic manoeuvring room to Pakistan to be more adventurous in conventional and sub-conventional provocation, which puts a strain on the

²³ Arnett, Eric. “Nuclear Stability and Arms Sales to India: Implications for US Policy.” *Arms Control Today*, August 1997, Vol. 27, No. 5

²⁴ Ahmed, Ali. *Reconciling Doctrines: Prerequisite for Peace in South Asia*. IDSA Monograph Series No.3, New Delhi: Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, September 2010.

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Indian security environment. In the nuclear domain, Pakistan has been able to take advantage of its friendship with China and create a 'two-front' problem for the Indian security establishment.

In the face of a stark and aggressive nuclear posture by Pakistan, it would seem that the best option for India is also to assume a matching counter nuclear strategy bringing to bear its technological and economic might. But many analysts, and indeed policy elements in the Indian Government, feel that the NFU posture makes eminent sense for India while it may not be acceptable to Pakistan. The reasons for this assessment are:-²⁵

- Given India's focus on socioeconomic development and the belief that regional stability will catalyse this development, India does not envisage any situation in which it might have to use nuclear weapons first. The country's foreign policy (much to the criticism of many observers) represents a status quo power with no territorial ambitions. The nuclear arsenal, therefore, serves a purely deterrent function. In this context, the NFU seems most logical.

- India's subscription to an NFU policy actually helps stabilise a regional situation, where a smaller, insecure nuclear force could give in to the temptation to launch a pre-emptive disarming first strike on the first sign that the crisis is moving beyond control. This would eliminate any freedom of strategic thought and action in crisis. The commitment to NFU, in fact, alleviates the feeling of insecurity in the Pakistan establishment, which is beneficial for India. It could easily be understood that if Pakistan, with its India-centric doctrines and historical inimical stance, were constantly under the fear of Indian nuclear strike, its own temptation to use nuclear force would be higher. Therefore, logic dictates that crisis stability is served by making the adversary feel more secure, rather than defensive and mistrustful.

The NFU policy has three advantages: it allows for better management of nuclear deterrent forces by focusing on capabilities that focus on retaliation; contributes to confidence building by eliminating capabilities for escalation dominance; and lowers the risk of conventional war as NFU is backed by

²⁵Sethi, Manpreet. *Nuclear Deterrence in Second Tier Weapons States: A Case Study for India*. CSH Occasional Paper No. 29/2009, New Delhi: Center De Sciences Humaines, December 2009.

adequate conventional defence.²⁶ It is not just the advantage of keeping the regional security situation controlled that motivates India to adopt postures that mitigate the insecurities of neighbours, however unfounded they might be. The country is well aware that the region is considered a nuclear flashpoint. At the same time, it remains conscious of the fact that military adventurism, irrespective of who resorts to it or whether it is confined to the conventional domain, would have a tremendous impact on hard-earned economic prosperity, setting back the nation's socioeconomic development for years, if not decades. This is a scenario a democratic country with ambitions to be a 'great power' can ill-afford to precipitate. Defensive and retrograde though this attitude might seem to nuclear 'hawks', it dictates that deterrence remain the primary military option and the nuclear doctrine be stated accordingly.²⁷

It may be naïve to assume that Pakistan has assumed its aggressive stance without adequate thought and

deliberations on the effects of its First Use policy on regional stability. As it has stated repeatedly, its security considerations are India-centric and nothing is likely to change that, even in the long run. The correct interpretations of the paradox of First Use have led Pakistan to develop tactical nuclear capability through miniaturisation, limited yield and tactical range capability. This gives the country, theoretically at least, the capability to maintain a low nuclear threshold even in the First Use mode. This means it can attempt either demonstration strikes or employ these in greater numbers to derail India's strike formations. This is not so much by physically stopping the pincers as slowing them down by the strategic, operational and logistic effects of transiting to the nuclear realm.²⁸

If the Indian nuclear doctrine is implemented in spirit after a tactical nuclear strike by Pakistan, it would mean massive retaliation, even if the actual damage was on Pakistan soil or casualties were in the hundreds only.

²⁶Hussain, Rifaat. "Deterrence and Nuclear Use: Doctrines in South Asia." In *The India Pakistan Nuclear Relationship*, edited by E. Sridharan, 151-184. New delhi: Routledge, 2007.

²⁷Venkatshamy, Krishnappa, and Princy George, . *Grand Strategy for India 2020 and Beyond*. New Delhi: Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, 2012.

²⁸Ahmed, Ali. "Pakistan's First Use in Perspective." *Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses*. 12 May 2011. <http://www.idsa.in/> (accessed September 09, 2014).

However, this is where nuclear deterrence enters the realm of a mind game and the assertion to readily use tactical nuclear weapons (for minimal or no tactical gain) in the face of massive retaliation aims to keep India unsettled.

At the nuclear level, both states are quits, with both having seemingly offensive doctrines: the First Use stance being overtly offensive and NFU promising a massive offense should a first strike occur. It would be a miscalculation to consider NFU a passive strategy.²⁹ The security tensions in South Asia, especially between India and Pakistan, will persist in the years to come. Even the most optimistic of strategists would not hazard a guess as to a possible nuclear détente between these two nuclear neighbours. Both countries have their own historic, attitudinal and paranoiac approach to security.

Notwithstanding the overtly aggressive nuclear stance by Pakistan, one apt for a country with conventional military weaknesses, the strategically advantageous (and sensible) stance of

NFU by India provides a counter that reduces security miscalculations, keeps the region away from the brink of nuclear misadventure and infuses deterrence stability.

On The Right Track

It can be well argued that in doctrinal and practical terms that given the security calculus of India, a First Use policy, considering the effect that the entire spectrum of conflict brings to bear on the national strategy, would not meet our strategic aims – the most significant being socio-economic prosperity in a secure environment. Related also is the adoption of the worldview that an aggressive First Use doctrine would invite international opprobrium, seriously undermine India's efforts towards total nuclear disarmament, and be prohibitively costly to implement.³⁰ A First Use doctrine, if seriously pursued and implemented, requires substantial national effort in capacity building and creation of infrastructure to be able to launch an attack in support of the aggressive strategy. Added to this economic burden is the strategic

²⁹ *ibid.*

³⁰ Kanwal, Gurmeet. "India's Nuclear Doctrine and Policy." *Strategic Analysis*, February 2001, Vol. 24:11: p1951-1972.

burden of maintaining nuclear forces on high levels of alert, devolution of launch authorisations and a large number of near-ready weapons – none of which sit well with the Indian outlook. The risks in such a posture are self-evident and best avoided.

Having adopted a ‘No First Use’ stance has also not insulated the Indian strategic community at large from criticism. Western analysts have on many occasions made haste to declare that Indian nuclear aspirations are nothing more than an instrument of ‘national pride and propaganda’. This criticism is somewhat unfair on many counts. One might concede that the analysts have the freedom to choose to disagree with the Indian Nuclear Doctrine, but they must accept that the doctrine is sound in its understanding of deterrence theory. Since the adoption of its nuclear doctrine formally at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Security in 2003, India has moved to put in place, at a measured pace, a triad of land-based, air-delivered and submarine-based nuclear forces and delivery assets to

conform to its declared doctrine of No First Use and retaliation only.³¹ Though not much information is available in the open domain, enough is known to be able to safely conclude that India has a nuclear command-and-control infrastructure that is reliable, hardened and designed to survive a first strike. It would be fair to assume that, in many respects, significant progress has been achieved to ensure that the NFU pledge can be adhered to in technological terms too.

It confounds many casual observers that India’s NFU policy makes the unequivocal assertion of a first strike a sound option for Pakistan as it is based on a correct assessment of India’s strategic restraint. Outlandish as it sounds, that is the fulcrum of nuclear stability in South Asia. There is no prudence in upsetting this ‘balance’ given that India has placed economic development on top of its national agenda. Pakistan’s nuclear nonchalance, therefore, owes much to its largely accurate appreciation of its nuclear posturing going untested.³² Moreover, no amount of estimation of

³¹Saran, Shyam. “India’s Nuclear Weapons are not for National Pride.” *The Tribune*. 09 May 2013. <http://www.tribuneindia.com/> (accessed September 06, 2014).

³²Ahmed, Ali. “Pakistan’s First use in Perspective.” *Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses*. 12 May 2011. <http://www.idsa.in/> (accessed September 09, 2014).

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the circumstances under which Pakistan would resort to First Use can render precise answers. This deliberate ambiguity from Pakistan is also a sound strategy as enunciation of red lines allows India to operate just below the threshold, thus demystifying the nuclear stance.³³

Moreover, no amount of estimation of the circumstances under which Pakistan would resort to First Use can render precise answers. This deliberate ambiguity from Pakistan is also a sound strategy as enunciation of red lines allows India to operate just below the threshold, thus demystifying the nuclear stance. The only way to deal with this ambiguity is by affirming the logic of NFU – the central objective being stabilisation of the region and not facilitating a favourable military outcome.

One cannot wish away India's security

problems, many of which have been bestowed by geography and regional politics. But it would be a stretch of the analytical process to argue that India's security problems arise from the tone and tenor of its nuclear doctrine. The reality is that India confronts two nuclear adversaries – Pakistan and China – that enjoy close relations with each other. Pakistan's nuclear weapons are unequivocally directed against India and under the command and control of the Pakistan Army.³⁴ Chinese nuclear weapons are not, at least as per the declarations of Chinese authorities, directed at India but the capability needs to remain in our strategic calculus. In any event, China is perhaps the only other country that has a declared NFU policy. In this situation, there is no wisdom in upping the ante, advocating First Use, and thereby creating a 'Mexican stand-off' where none exists.



³³Krepon, Michael. "Pakistan's Nuclear Strategy and Deterrence Stability." *Stimson Centre*. <http://www.stimson.org/> (accessed September 07, 2014).

³⁴Chari, PR. "India's Nuclear Doctrine: Stirrings of Change." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. 04 June 2014. <http://carnegieendowment.org/> (accessed August 23, 2014).

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