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**CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STRATEGIC STUDIES**

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**PROCEEDINGS OF SEMINAR**  
**ON**  
**NUCLEAR INDIA AND THE WORLD**  
**8TH SEPTEMBER, 1998**

## CENTRE FOR ADVANCED STRATEGIC STUDIES

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## PROCEEDINGS OF THE SEMINAR

Shri R.D. Sathe, former Foreign Secretary, President of the Centre for Advanced Strategic Studies (CASS) and Chairman of the Seminar opened the Seminar, welcomed and introduced the distinguished Main Speakers and welcomed all the participants of the seminar.

Shri K. Subrahmanyam (IAS Retd.), one of the foremost analysts of defence and foreign policy matter, who established the IDSA in Delhi, and is currently the consulting Editor of Times of India and Economic Times gave the background and rationale behind Pokhran II in the first session. In the second session, Air Cmde (Retd.) Jasjit Singh, Director IDSA and a member of the Governing Council of the CASS, a prolific writer on national security concerns spoke on "Minimum viable deterrence and infrastructure". Shri Manoj Joshi, a well known analyst of defence policy and foreign policy and a correspondent for The Hindu covered the "domestic scenario" in the third session.

After presentation by the Main Speakers, the subject was thrown open for general discussion. The discussion proved animated, educative, thought provoking and lively. The participants asked pertinent, searching questions and made relevant comments. This gave an opportunity to the Main Speakers/Panelists to delve deeper into the subject, further enlightening the participants.

### OPENING REMARKS BY THE CHAIRMAN RAM SATHE

This morning we have three very very distinguished speakers, to discuss the question of 'Nuclear India and the World'. Since Pokhran II, India's foreign policy has undergone a major change. Our relations with the world have similarly undergone a very major change. Whether the impact of Pokhran II was good or bad, or harmful does not arise any more. It is finished. We cannot unscramble the egg so to say.. What we have to think about hereafter is where do we go from here.

It is quite evident that there will be a number of options open to us, a number of options that have already been closed and we will certainly have to do a great deal of thinking on the subject.

The job of conveying the views of the public to our political masters, lies with the public in India today. The education of the public is therefore of very great importance and CASS attempts to try and bring to the notice of the public those factors which affect our defence and foreign policies.

This morning we have three very very distinguished people. On my left is Mr. Subrahmanyam, who is an IAS officer, who established the IDSA in Delhi and has been a regular contributor to newspapers and magazines and is today one of the foremost analysts of defence and foreign policy matters. Air Cmde. Jasjit Singh on my right, succeeded Mr.Subrahmanyam and currently he is the head of the IDSA in New Delhi. Like Mr.Subrahmanyam he is also a prolific writer and he has just given me his latest book on 'Nuclear India', written after Pokhran. On my extreme left is Mr.Manoj Joshi, who has been correspondent for the Hindu and has been a great analyst of Defence Policy as well as foreign policy. So you will see what kind of a galaxy we have this morning with us.

We are very grateful to all the three of them for having agreed to participate in this shall we say, discussion group, or seminar, or may I say, it is not a full fledged seminar but it is an effort to try and project their views on this important subject.

The time we have for this is rather short, but nevertheless, we hope that within the time constraints, we will have the opportunity of listening to them, querying them and shall we say clearing our own thoughts on the subject. I request Mr.Subrahmanyam to begin.

## SESSION I

### NUCLEAR INDIA AND THE WORLD

#### BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE BEHIND POKHRAN II

Chairman : R D Sathe  
Main Speaker : K. Subrahmanyam

**Mr. Chairman & Friends**

It gives me a great pleasure to be here in the city of Pune and to address such a distinguished audience on the issue of Nuclear India.

One of the major problems on this subject is, for some very justifiable, but very large number of unjustifiable reasons. The government, I would say successive governments, and successive leaders of various political parties did not take not only the country into confidence, they did not even take their own parties into confidence when they have been pursuing the nuclear policy.

Therefore it is a very important subject because it also reflects on the quality of our democracy. It is not merely a question of foreign policy issue.

Now the facts are the following :

The project to weaponise was sanctioned by Rajiv Gandhi, following Pakistan going nuclear in 1987. The Indian weapons were ready by end 1989, early 90. Therefore first of all, a nuclear Pakistan we have been living with for the last eleven years, and they have been living with a nuclear India for the last eight years.

Therefore when people here talk about - will there be an arms race, we know there has not been an arms race for the last eight years. Will the defence expenditure go up? We know, for the last eight years we

have been cutting on defence expenditure. Will tensions increase? Last eight years we have been fighting a covert war in Kashmir and it did not escalate.

So you can see how many of these questions which are agitating peoples' minds arise out of the fact that they have been kept out of these true facts of the situation. Then you had a lot of people who protested against India going nuclear without knowing that their own leaders have sanctioned the project, have been pursuing the project. Did you know it? They were not told and therefore we have got to look at it why did this happen in this way.

What the rest of the world is telling us which unfortunately quite a few of our people swallow, and it is not their fault, because again the Government has not been educating the people and our media is dominated by the Western thinking. And then you have the BBC and CNN all the time beaming into our houses, and our own electronic media is not able to effectively counter them and therefore we have been told a whole lot of things which are basically untrue.

What are we being told? We are being told that the nuclear weapon powers are reducing their nuclear weapons and the world is moving towards nuclear disarmament. This is what a consummate actor like Bill Clinton tells us and therefore what we did was wrong. This is what we have been told and lot of people in this country have bought it.

But what is the truth? The truth is on 12th May 1995 the international community did something unpardonable. They extended the non proliferation treaty indefinitely and unconditionally, thereby legitimising the nuclear weapons. When people ask, you have been fighting against nuclear weapons. Yes, we did, we continue to do it. But on that date the international community told India, look we are not going to accept it. We are going to legitimise nuclear weapons in the hands of five most war prone powers of the world. And we were left high and dry. That is the truth.

Our non-aligned brethren were not with us. They have all voted for it. Your neighbours were not with you. They have all voted for it. So you are living in a world which had legitimised nuclear weapons. It did

not make chemical weapons. It abolished the chemical weapons. It agreed to abolish and eliminate biological weapons, but it sanctioned the legitimacy of nuclear weapons in the hands of five nuclear weapon powers, the five nuclear hegemonic powers. The five powers - permanent members of the Security Council, they perpetuated the after Potsdam system of the world order.

That is what we inherited in 95. and that is the reason why Mr.Narasimha Rao tried to conduct nuclear tests later that year. It is not as if BJP did that. Mr. Narsimha Rao consulted all the stalwarts.Finally,the BJP Government headed by Mr Vajpaye conducted the tests and he did it because he knew that with the nuclear weapons, we were now living in a totally changed world. Unfortunately, when that act happened, even though in Times of India I wrote an editorial, calling it "A Day Infinite", but it was not, people did not understand the significance of that event.

Then what happened. In 1996 they brought the comprehensive test ban treaty, which was neither comprehensive, nor a test ban treaty. It was a nuclear test explosion ban treaty and the whole idea behind it is now the five nuclear weapon powers got their nuclear weapons legitimised and all the nations of the world barring four, had signed that treaty, and thereby forswore their nuclear option. They said this is the time to consolidate that by having a test ban treaty and making everybody sign it and there will be no more new nuclear weapon power. So they brought that. Fine!

We said when we found that they would not link up that treaty with disarmament, they would not make that treaty a comprehensive test ban treaty, the Americans will continue to do research through computer, computer simulation, computer designs. So under those circumstances we told them look we will not sign this treaty. It comes in the way of our national security interest. But if you want to sign the treaty, you can have it.

At that stage, at the last moment, the Chinese, supported by the British and the Russians, introduced a new clause. In that clause they said India should be one of the 44 countries which would sign the treaty and ratify the treaty, if this treaty is to come into force and if in three years after signing of this treaty that does not happen, there will be a



meeting of the conference participants to consider ways and means of making that happen.

In other words, first, they are holding up the NPT threat to you. In three years if you do not sign it, we will do things to you. Sanctions and lots of other things. Two, they were also trampling upon international law. There is a Vienna Convention on law of the treaties and that convention says, that is very basic international relations. That convention says, no country which is not a member of the treaty is obligated by the provisions of a treaty, which is common sense. If you have not undertaken voluntarily any obligations those obligations should not be imposed upon you.

But this was violated by putting in this clause and then we blocked it. We said you cannot do this to us. When we blocked it, they took up the issue straight to the United Nations and it was passed. It was passed, again, all our non aligned brethren voting against us and the strength of non alignment was destroyed. The non-aligned destroyed non alignment when they destroyed the autonomy of countries to take their own decisions. In fact non alignment got destroyed when nuclear weapons were legitimised by the action of the non-aligned nations. It was again given another burial when they passed the CTBT. Please understand what our position was.

Thirdly, look at the world as it is. Today in the world, after the end of the cold war all the countries of the Northern Hemisphere, from Vancouver in British Columbia to Vladivostock on the Pacific shore of the Russian maritime provinces, they are all members, 54 nations are members of the single security organisation called Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe. All white nations. They are protected by the nuclear deterrent capability of four nuclear weapon powers. United States, Russia, who are now partners in peace, and UK and France.

Then the United States has bilateral security arrangements extending deterrence to South Korea, to Japan, Australia and New Zealand. So you find all the white and yellow nations have their security guaranteed by nuclear deterrence. China is a nuclear weapon power on its own. Who are left out. The Latins, the browns and the blacks. Then of

course whenever you have an apartheid system, that is always accompanied by a Bantustan system. This Bantustan is called nuclear weapon free zone in which the non-nuclear weapon countries accept the overlordship and suzerainty of the nuclear weapon powers that gives them protection and for forswearing nuclear weapons and all those things they are given protection by the nuclear weapon States.

Now you have one Bantustan in Latin America called Tlatelco Core Treaty. You have another Bantustan, the whole of Africa, one in South Pacific or Waratunga Treaty, and the other is in Asia. That means they are all under the nuclear hegemonic order accepting the legitimacy of the nuclear weapons and accepting the overlordship of the five nuclear hegemonic powers, having different kinds of security. One security for the white and the yellow, and another type of security for the others, and even out of that whatever left out, the South Asia. Now, if you had continued it for the next two to three years, then South Asia would have been squeezed into it after three year period, that is after the CTBT ends up. Therefore we had to conduct a nuclear test in order to break out of this stranglehold of the five nuclear hegemonic powers. This is one side of the story.

There is something else which has been going on very silently for the last 34 years, since the Chinese became nuclear weapon power. When the Chinese became nuclear weapon power, they were prepared to break all international norms. At that time there was a treaty called partial test ban treaty that you should not conduct atmospheric nuclear tests. The Chinese broke that. They conducted not only atmospheric nuclear tests, all those atmospheric nuclear tests fallouts came down on Japan and on India. We did receive all the successive fallouts of the Chinese tests. We did not even mention it, we did not even complain about it.

Then in 1965 Lal Bahadur Shashtri sought the nuclear deterrent protection of United Kingdom first. It was turned down. Then he sanctioned the project for India to produce nuclear explosive devices in 1965. And then of course the project got somewhat delayed, terminated because of the death of Dr. Bhabha. Then after Mrs. Gandhi took over in 1966-67, she sent L.K.Jha and Sarabhai to get security assurances. She could not get it from Russia, she could not get it from France, from UK or from the United States. Therefore she refused to sign the Non Proliferation Treaty.

People in this country, go on repeating all the time, Oh, we have lived with Chinese nuclear weapons without any worries all these years. That is not true. It is because of the Chinese threat you did ask for security guarantees in the sixties. Right! Then in 1971 when the American and the Chinese made up, with Kissinger's visit to Beijing, they had a line up somewhat like the present line up - Pakistan, China and the United States, at a time when ten million refugees were pushed into our soil and a million people were killed in Bangla Desh.

At that time, forced with that situation, Mrs. Gandhi did what she was most reluctant to do. She signed a treaty with Soviet Union. That was meant to provide India nuclear deterrent protection and it did. In 1971 December when the United States sent its 'Enterprise' into Bay of Bengal, in an act of nuclear intimidation, the Soviets countered it. Not only that it was because of the fear of Soviet Union that Chinese did not yield to the American pressure to join Pakistan in attacking India in 1971.

It is there in an interview given by Mr. Nixon in the Time magazine of 29th July 1985. He even says he considered the use of nuclear weapons if there had been a war between Russia and China. So it is not as if we had not been threatened with nuclear weapons. It is because of that again Mrs. Gandhi authorised the tests in 1974, Pokhran I.

Then came the pact between Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and China in 1976, a pact which Bhutto claims he negotiated after patient negotiations for eleven long years from 1965. And then the Chinese started helping Pakistan for nuclear weapons. It started in 76. There was a little gap when Bhutto was hanged. But then again the Chinese resumed it with Zia-Ul-Hak. In 1981, the Pakistanis got an assurance from Americans that they will not interfere with their nuclear weapons programme. It is recorded in Gen Arif's book. The assurance was given by no less a person than the Secretary of State Alexander Hague and the Pakistanis made the nuclear weapons with Chinese assistance in 87 and the Americans looked away. They looked away for three years. They told lies to their Congress for three years.

In 1990, finally they said, yes they have it and then the Pressler amendment took effect. Having given them the nuclear weapons, the Chinese started also supplying missiles to them from 1990. The missiles

arrived in Pakistan in 93. This is admitted in Pakistani senate by Foreign Minister Abdul Sattar, but the Americans still denied by saying they are still to make a finding about arrival of Chinese missiles in Pakistan. For five years they are still making a finding.

The reason for that is if they did make a finding and they say that Chinese missiles have arrived in Pakistan, the American Law requires them to break up all kinds of relations with China and it would affect China-America commercial relations, which is now around 80 to 90 billion dollars. In the eighties, the Americans decided to sacrifice their non-proliferation objectives to the need of having Pakistan on their side in their war against Soviet Union in Afghanistan. In 1990 they are prepared to sacrifice their non-proliferation objectives because of the trade with China. But of course the centre is Pakistanis and they also acquired missiles for not querrying by the Americans.

One may ask the question why did Chinese do that, especially when we were all thinking that Chinese are good friends of ours. The Chinese of course had the Sun Tzu like our Chanakya except that we don't read Chanakya. We have forgotten him. They do read and so they remember it. Sun Tzu said the best victory in a war is the one which you are able to get without fighting a battle.

The Chinese decided if they can only countervail India, with Pakistani nuclear weapons and they can keep Pakistan under control and they need not give Pakistan a lot but just a little, a few nuclear weapons, then in that case India will be locked up in South Asia as a regional power, while China will be in a position to play role of a global power. They do not have any more animus against us. They only wanted to put you in your place. In diplomacy that is all quite permissible.

Therefore the Chinese helped Pakistan with nuclear weapons, and helped Pakistan with missiles. And they told us, yes we have given them a few missiles, not many. Do not worry about it. And when they were asked they said yes they have some nuclear things, but they were done before we joined NPT in 1992 after that we are not doing much.

That is not true either. They have been transferring things in 1996, 1997 and all that has appeared in the American press. When the

Americans go about saying yes, yes, we have taken it up with the Chinese, the Chinese have told us they won't do it again. That is about all!

So you are faced now with the international situation which was trying to finally extinguish your nuclear option and reduce you permanently to a lower nuclear security status and an objective of the global nuclear hegemonic order.

Two, the Chinese were trying to totally countervail you and lock you up in South Asia through only diplomatic means, not by any military threats. We were faced with both these things and therefore we were left with no option. Either you break out of it or you are going to succumb to it.

And I meant it, as I said, Rajiv Gandhi was anti-nuclear. He himself sanctioned the project and then it is pursued by V.P.Singh. V.P.Singh at least came out in the open, admitted it in a BBC hard talk. Then by Chandrashekhar, then by Narasimha Rao. Narasimha Rao also tried to conduct the tests. Then DeveGouda and then Inder Gujral. And Inder Gujral stopped our signing the CTBT. So it is not true here saying that, why did they all do this. Was it done for party purposes? Was it done for parochial intentions? I am not ruling out parochial intentions. Somebody said, OK we did it. If we did it please at least give us some credit.

But that is not the only thing. There are reasons much beyond all that. These are the reasons. But we have got to ask ourselves. All these are available in public. Not one thing I have said is a secret, excepting what I told about Rajiv Gandhi sanctioning it, except that nothing is a secret. And it has been written in the country and there are any number of books in which we have pointed out all these things. But still our public was not educated, our media was not educated to understand that this was what was happening and therefore we have to do the tests.

Thank you!

**SESSION II****NUCLEAR INDIA AND THE WORLD****MINIMUM DETERRENCE AND INFRASTRUCTURE****Chairman : R D Sathe****Main Speaker : Air Cmde Jasjit Singh**

Mr. Chairman, Ladies and Gentlemen

It is good to come back here and to talk. Otherwise one gets stuck in Delhi in seminar rooms and conferences. It is very important that we talk to each other in all parts of India.

Mr. Subrahmanyam has given both the background as well as the rationale of where we are and what we are making out of it. I think this is to be seen. Obviously the unstated factor that India has pursued a policy to maintain its independence of choice, independence of decision making to maximise its own interest. Having done that, how do we see the situation evolving? And I will try to cover not so much the military side but the weapon side.

I think that we are now looking ahead having exercised the nuclear option. We have done it and there are two distinct acts which took place on 11th May. India declared itself to be a nuclear weapon state and carried out nuclear tests. But why did we declare ourselves as a nuclear weapon state? I think most of the rationale is heard, but as a pointer to the future policy it must be clear that we require nuclear weapons to deter a nuclear weapon threat. A very specific requirement. Whatever factor which emerges, the threat must be deterred, wherever it is used, it must be retaliated.

That is, basically to ensure this protection, this government decided to declare itself a nuclear weapon state. Please do not expect the nuclear weapons to solve the problems of your electricity, your water supply or the bus system or pollution or even Kashmir. Many countries have sought

to see nuclear weapons in terms of power and prestige. I do not think India requires nuclear weapon for power and prestige. Power and prestige will come from the way we solve our problems, from the way we are fighting with our problems.

And one of the problems was how do we deal with the nuclear threat, which is inevitable. Obviously, the way the world has evolved over the last fifty five years, nuclear weapons do carry a certain aura of power and prestige. If it has to come, it comes as a by-product. I think we should not take it too seriously. If this is so, if our intention is to deter a nuclear threat and nothing more than that, then let us start to define our nuclear doctrine. That means we do not have to create a structure or a doctrine or a force or a thinking or any command and control system which will then use nuclear weapons for fighting a war. We do not go beyond simply deterring nuclear threat.

What level should this deterrence be maintained. United States and Soviet Union built up 30000 to 35000 warheads each. When you look back now over the years, something like 148000 nuclear warheads were manufactured during the cold war, averaging out to eight warheads per day, and with the infrastructure that was created to build that, that tends to surpass our thinking about everything nuclear.

I think we in India have to evolve our own thinking, which serves our interest as best as it can. If this is so, the maximum that India will ever require, in my judgment, is a minimum deterrence capability. You require a maximum deterrence capability if you want to get into a war fighting doctrine, so that if you want to fight a war, then you must have more than what the other side has, so that then you can fight a war and win. And we know how disastrous the final outcome of a nuclear war will be for anyone, for anyone the victor and the vanquished.

If this is the maximum, then obviously this is also not the starting point. On the 8th of September 98 we should have on the ground a minimum deterrence. A minimum deterrence can be minimum at different levels. At one level that minimum deterrence is in place today. Its own quality can be improved to bring it to a slightly different level. That has got to do with numbers, the ranges of delivery systems etc. But in principle that is all that is needed. In fact, why we are working on the

minimum deterrence and in fact the Prime Minister of India has already declared that as a policy.

The substance therefore is how do we take it forward and what are the implications for the country of this posture. At one level the correct posture for deterrence, nuclear tests also requires the commitment that you will not be the first to use a nuclear weapon. This is a commitment, this is a posture, this is a statement of intention as we see it. Is it legally binding under all circumstances? Perhaps not. But in all honesty this is what our aim will be. That India will not be the first to use a nuclear weapon and we hope the other nuclear weapon states will provide similar commitments, similar assurances, as China, you know already since 64, has given a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons.

So at least at the political psychological level, India now achieves the level of equality with China that they will not use first and we will not use first and so therefore try and stabilise the situation, reduce the risk of such a necessity of keeping this at 'finger on' trigger readiness. Pakistan I am afraid is unlikely to commit to no first use and therefore is to be seen in a different context. We only wanted to deter a threat from a nuclear weapon country. We can give a firm commitment since we only wanted a deterrence from the threat from a nuclear weapon country. We can give a firm commitment never to use nuclear weapons against a non-nuclear weapon country because they cannot pose a nuclear threat. One can argue in detail that what happens if a nuclear state poses a threat via a non-nuclear country, or in that case active party to a nuclear threat. But those are refinements of the concept.

Coming back to the minimum deterrence, then, there is a point that can be generally defined for a foreseeable future. Exact numbers will vary, but what is required is an aircraft delivered nuclear war head capability, a land based missile development capability and a sea-based missile delivery capability.

One could argue that the sea based delivery capability may take much longer to develop because the submarines have still to be developed specially with nuclear power and energy. So therefore in the shortest time what we have is the ballistic missile delivery capability



and an aircraft delivery capability. What ranges should we cover? Should we think in terms of intercontinental system? You will have to think of that if you find seriously that the United States is going to be the primary threat. It is very difficult to believe this and therefore I would rule it out at this point.

But certainly a country with which we have an extensive territorial dispute, disputes of sovereignty like China and on the other side Pakistan obviously the weapon system, the arsenal, must cover in adequate measure, with areas which these countries are part of. That defines the range and also defines the numbers and I am not going to go into those numbers and their ranges but merely to indicate that that is so.

But the more important issue is that if we will not be the first to use nuclear weapons, then what are we going to do, how are we going to keep them? Of course, if you follow the example, which is a bad example of the United States and the Soviet Union during the cold war of keeping old nuclear forces on trigger alert all the time, the risk of accident goes up, the risk of miscalculation goes up and the risk of even accidental launch goes up. Mistakes can be made.

Do you want to get into that situation? Obviously not. So we need to take precautions that we keep the distance flexible. The war heads separated from the delivery system. The war heads themselves are kept under certain level of adequate control, so that this does not open up to many other difficulties and the delivery system itself is ensured in such a way that it is available for use as and when required. That in the strategic jargon is called de-alerted, and de-targeted nuclear warheads and kept separate from the delivery system.

That is what I have been arguing for many years, that this provides us then with a deterrence capability which could be made into an operational minimum deterrence at a very short notice. There is also a difficulty. A question can be asked, if you wish to only not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, and somebody does it against India. Certainly a certain amount of destruction will be caused. But my first target is much more likely to be India's nuclear arsenal rather than anything else.

Then our ability to strike back which is the fundamental point of this deterrence, not allow for threat to survivability. to the nuclear

arsenal. Unless we have the ability to survive nuclear arsenal the whole posture starts becoming extremely weak and not very convincing. There will have to be measures taken for increasing that survivability. There are many methods of doing it. The United States and Soviet Union, China and other nuclear countries do it by keeping their land based missiles in silos. They rely more on that and rely less on mobile missiles which could be moved from place A to place B. For us of course, a mobile land based system provides shifting very very quickly. The aircraft of course is extremely viable and it can be shifted around very very quickly.

Now, then, that is the basic broad elements of the force and how it has to be kept ready and how it must be available, to be able to retaliate against an actual strike at a very very short notice. My preferred time is less than one hour. I think it is possible.

At the same time, the very fact that India would have an adequate large enough surviving arsenal against an actual use. This is what provides a deterrence from such a use or a threat of use and that is how we would have made India safe from becoming Hiroshima at some point or the other.

This also requires, Mr. Chairman, an adequate command and control system. Not the questions that have been raised after Pokhran II. Let me address the most fundamental question - Does India have a Command and Control System?

For nearly 50 years we have been looking at the nuclear arsenal mostly of the United States and the Soviet Union, now Russia. Tens of thousands of nuclear war heads, infrastructure spread over globally. If you want now they are stationed even in Australia, in the Indian Ocean, South Atlantic Ocean. Tremendous structure that is linked to this, tremendous structure that is created for nuclear war fighting by the United States.

There are examples in 1991 when the Iraqis started firing Skuds into Israel and into Saudi Arabia. The way the system was working. The existing satellites which were stationed over United States, gave an early warning of the missile launch, which were then linked to the middle of United States and operating through communication systems in Australia

and other places. They would pick up the launch of a Skud, have it analysed by the super computers at the command headquarters, communicate back to all these places, in something like 1.4 seconds, to align their missiles with Skuds.

If you are talking about that sort of an infrastructure then of course you are talking about India's total GDP for such a system. Should we need it? Obviously not. That is why you go back to the starting point. What do we need? War fighting or war avoiding deterrent. What is then a deterrent? A deterrent is then a level of punishment that your potential adversary in your judgment is willing to bear. Beyond this, things will not be expected to go at the unacceptable level of punishment and therefore would be deterred from a certain course of action. And that course of action, if you want to do something else, the economic sanctions etc., then you have to be able to tell him clearly that, friend, don't try to do that. Something will happen.

So the command and control system that you need must be compatible to the doctrine that you adopt and the force level at which you require it. Two things stand out very clearly. One that there is a command and control system existing for the use of military power in India. Not that a command and control has not existed. There are certain very specific for nuclear weapons and nuclear arsenal. There is a command and control system. This country was starting for the design of a command and control system. The principles of the command and control system are well established, well enshrined, well developed for the last 51 years. What are those?

Number one, the entirety of military power is controlled by the elected representatives of the people, that is the Prime Minister of India, and the Council of Ministers. That is the constitutional authority, that a political control exercises authority over military power as such and therefore will also exercise control and command over nuclear weapons, nuclear arsenal, nuclear forces. Obviously ruled by a Committee.

Therefore the Prime Minister becomes the final point. This takes start from there. He will always be the balancer of what shall we do. This has to stop there or start from there. He will always be advised for pre-planning, because you don't sit down after getting struck that what

shall we do, AAPKA KYA KHAYAL HAI. DEKHO. DEKHENGE, SOCHENGE. All this has to be done before hand because at that time India's survival or its success will be at stake. Therefore one has to have very professional planning bodies at the corporate level. One is the political military level of planning establishment for which really speaking what is needed is the National Security Council that will establish a National Committee, with the Prime Minister in Chair. That means you re-create the Committee that used to exist for the first 15 years and also the Committee of the Cabinet that would have Prime Minister in the Chair and the Defence Minister, the Finance Minister and the Home Minister as members, with the Chiefs of Staff in permanent attendance.

Whereas more detailed re-creation of the Defence Minister's Committee so that Defence Minister is in the chair, with the Service Chiefs, Defence Secretary and the Foreign Secretary as members. They have to take decision then on planning of nuclear arsenal. How much, where it will be required, where it goes. It will require an appropriate staff dedicated to the planning of nuclear force, nuclear arsenal and that therefore strategic planning staff is what I have in mind, with the Defence Minister in the Chair at the institutional level.

And therefore also reverting back from the other side we require a professional group of people who can make out options, look at various targets which will give you the type of results which you are looking for. That is the appropriate authority to decide finally what job is to be done and finally get the approval of the Defence Minister's Committee or the Committee for National Security.

In detail, the execution part has to be again reflected in Indian Air Force experience in the delivery of weapon system. Bulk of this or large segments of nuclear weapons still will be air delivered. For the long run, we must work on the practical side, an aircraft based, a land missile based and a sea based nuclear deterrent. A sea based deterrent is likely to take more time, but very much be in the calculations.

On the other hand the missile based deterrent will also take a little more time but perhaps less time than what it is. The aircraft based one as existed is available right now and in my judgment safe. Any other

infrastructure that is needed to go with that is fine. There is also a structure of improving the safety of the war head. As we go to the force level, that start to get deployed or they are still in storage. I think a special force of the Indian army will have to be created to provide security, safety of the war head and a scientific community, both from the nuclear establishment as well as from within the army, people have to be trained and retrained, for both the safety and adequate specified command handling. It will also provide a specified command of the airforce. The goal must never be forgotten and that is that these are meant never to be used. The more credible you make it, the less likely the nuclear weapons will be used.

That is the basic question that India now as it moves into 21st Century India is one of the leading centres of power in the world. Where there is a level necessary, it exists in the power and capability. If you look at China-United States or China-Japan, Japan and United States or Russia and United States. But there is a realisation that this is where power really lies in the coming decade. And what happens in these countries, these five or six countries that I have specified. United States, Japan, China, India, Russia. India has to play a normal role. It has to have the nuclear weapon capability as much as the other weapon states have it. The other weapon states have a very strong alliance.

One last point. What about disarmament? Mr. Subrahmanyam mentioned that disarmament is not on the agenda of the five weapon states. It is not likely to take place in the near future. This is why, in my judgment, India has to be more vigilant in the last 10 years programme for disarmament. Now that India itself has become a nuclear state, or a State with nuclear weapon, still it has to look at this issue of nuclear disarmament. Nuclear disarmament, Mr. Chairman, is not only good in principle, not only sounds good to morality, ethics, but in the whole gamut of weapons of mass destruction, it also has been. But this is also my belief, Mr. Chairman, that global nuclear disarmament will improve India's security, now that India has declared itself a nuclear weapon state or let us call it a state with nuclear weapons.

Security objectives, and therefore diplomacy, must be early disarmament time bound programme. Nuclear weapons is an insurance against uncertainty. Nobody believes that insurance is something final and permanent. This particular step, is an interim step we hope,

otherwise there is no disarmament even 100 years later. Then I think what we have done is pragmatic. Therefore, I hope my country does not become cynical like the other nuclear weapon states and only stops to pay lip service to this disarmament. Sincerity of objective and therefore diplomacy must be there to keep its pressure of pushing and pulling for early disarmament.

If there is a time bound programme or not, is a matter of detail, but to me India's nuclear weapon is an insurance against an uncertain future and lastly, which will assure that our children will grow in peace.

Thank you.

## SESSION III

### NUCLEAR INDIA AND THE WORLD

#### DOMESTIC SCENARIO

Chairman : R D Sathe

Main Speaker : Manoj Joshi

Mr. Chairman,

I am going to look at the domestic issues that have arisen from these nuclear tests. When the three of us decided how to share the burden of what we are speaking, we said that we should divide the topic. You have heard the two elements of it and I would try to put in the third element. You are familiar with it since it is published formally but I think it is important to recapitulate it because the direction in which the domestic debate has been going does appear to be a situation where we may end up snatching defeat from the jaws of victory.

Now it is very clear that when the tests themselves were conducted, there was tremendous amount of support and enthusiasm amongst the average people. Almost all the polls reflected this. I do not think, barring a few instances, that this was any kind of jingoistic celebration. I think there was a sense of relief amongst knowledgeable circles, in the armed forces there was a sense of relief because the one factor which has not been adequately commented upon is the role played by the armed forces in pressuring the government to take this decision. The reason was very simple.

The armed forces of the Union are charged with the defence of this country and since 1983 they have got no political guidance as to what they were supposed to do. Planning was in a vacuum because you are not supposed to assume that you have nuclear weapons. The result was there was an air of unreality in the planning process. Of course a lot of focus was with our insurgencies, our difficulties in Kashmir. But the basic fact remains for the armed forces that if they were to be given the

twin tasks of deterring Pakistan on one hand and undertaking a posture of defence vis-a-vis China, could they really do it minus nuclear weapons?

In 1986, when Gen.Sunderjee became the Chief of the Army Staff, in his order of the day, he said, I hope that the Government of the day will take this into account. Now putting such an important matter in terms of hope or a wish is somewhat incredible kind of a statement. Whatever it is, army, air-force, navy chiefs after chiefs. the armed forces fraternity, put forward this viewpoint and eventually this decision has been taken and now we are trying to see how this all fits into the national ethos, the security concerns etc. but what we did see after this initial enthusiasm was that there was a tremendous counter pressure which came up from the United States, I would say the Western Camp and Japan, reflected through the media. The kind of positions which Mr.Subrahmanyam brought out, the kind of half truth, the kind of one sided statements.

And in our media, which is unfortunately very thin, in terms of intellectual content because we do receive a lot of our international news through the foreign news agencies which put forward the foreign point of view. We do have a core of journalists who are unable to distinguish as to where exactly does the act of manipulation occur. You do have a sense created, that yes, may be there is something wrong. May be they have a point because of this constant barrage of criticism that was heaped upon us.

I must add here that many of the opposition political parties added their weight to this. The communist parties took the most incredible view that somehow India's nuclear deterrent capability was threatening to world peace. On the other hand Chinese nuclear deterrent capability was perfectly OK. But somehow the Indian one was threatening.

The Congress position waffled. The Congress waffled between one position and the other position. As it is very clear that their posture was dictated unfortunately more by a sense of negativism vis-a-vis the BJP rather than a coherent posture of a mature, great political party that the Congress has once been. I think it would be impossible to deny that their attitude towards the ruling party shed a lot of comments.



The BJP is a party that does arouse strong emotions, often negative. From the point of view of minorities they have negative views about the party and this was often reflected in the position that various people took on the nuclear issue.

Of course, all this was compounded by the extremely poor handling of the situation by the Government of the day. Many people have had occasion to comment on the fact that the Prime Minister did not get on the phone ; half an hour before he made the public announcement, he could have had the leaders of the opposition parties, he could have had them over for lunch when the tests were being conducted and then kept them with him and then informed them that this had occurred. There was a sense amongst some of the party leaders that these people were taking political advantage and I suspect that was what exactly was happening and I think the BJP did hope that they would be able to gather some reflective glory from the event.

This is not unnatural in our political parties scenario. But I think if it had been better finessed by the party, it would have resulted in greater gains for the nation as such. The governments' handling of this in a domestic scene also reflected in the international relations. I think in many instances, the kind of positions taken, was again a very narrow decision making base that resulted in this. For a variety of obvious reasons this is not a decision that could have been broadcast or could have been told to too many people that let us now get prepared because we are going to conduct a nuclear test.

Nevertheless, there is a feeling amongst people, many of us that without necessarily disclosing the facts that the tests had to be conducted, certain exercises could have been undertaken which could have prevented some of the more extreme reactions that surfaced both domestically as well as internationally. Now the result of all this has been an element of incoherence that seems to have crept up in the approach of the government. While we were aware that Mr. Jaswant Singh is negotiating with Mr. Talbot on how India can escape from US sanctions, there is very little available from the government, barring the statements made initially on what exactly its nuclear policy is all about. What exactly do they mean by minimum nuclear deterrent. Where exactly they intend to move from here.

There is a strange silence, and part of the reason of the silence is that perhaps the government itself has been overawed by the event. And of course overwhelmed by the political crisis. But then that is the fact of life for politicians that they have to make sure that, notwithstanding all their party difficulties, they have to keep a very keen and sharp eye and keep the national policy on an even keel.

Now the first issue that, I think, the government of the day must undertake is the whole question of the doctrine. What exactly, why exactly did India undertake these tests? What exactly it intends to do with these weapons? How are they going to be employed? The reason for a need for a doctrine is that it provides a certain clarity, clarity which is needed for not only our own decision makers but clarity also for our adversaries so that there are no mistakes, because this is a situation where there can be no mistakes. We cannot have errors of misjudgment by our adversaries, that they misjudge signals from us.

I think the episode in which the Americans, the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chief of Staff was in Islamabad when the American cruise missiles were flying, is a case in point that the Americans obviously having thought through all this, were able to act on this. But on our side, we find that this kind of inter-action of policy, this kind of the needed integration of decision making is not occurring. There are hopes that have been placed on the National Security Council. National Security Council, as our political leaders and others tell us, is the place where this integration will take place, where the civilians and the armed forces and the others will form a seamless kind of a decision making body that will provide this coherence.

But the question of doctrine also requires a wider input. Wider input because every doctrine must reflect the ethos of the people, ethos of the country, because unless that ethos is there you will be in trouble. You can have a magnificent doctrine which if it does not have the support of the people or the ethos of the people, it will get into trouble. I think the ethos of India is reflected in deep pacifism at one level. There is a deep pacifism, yet there is an awareness of the millennia old history of invasion, a sense of pride that we are a great nation and a sense that we somehow do not want to be a big power but we would rather be taken as a great nation.

Now all this kind of a mixture shows that the inputs have come into this doctrine. And as a result of that we see that we have postulated the whole idea of a minimum nuclear deterrent and a no first use policy. I think no other nuclear power has been so clear as to how defensive its intentions are notwithstanding the fact that here is this country which had to conduct its tests, as Mr. Subrahmanyam pointed out, in the face of flagrant aggressive policies of its two neighbours. Yet India has gone out of its way to put across its, what should I say, minimum interest, intentions somehow to recover. Through years it could have taken many of these steps but did not take these steps.

From the issue of doctrine, so to speak, as Air Cmde. Jasjit Singh pointed out that once you have all these in place, then we have to talk about command and control system. Your doctrine will define what kind of a command and control system you have. It is very obvious that it is to be decided on, as per our system, the political authority will be in control. But obviously when you talk of nuclear weapons and when you talk of the issue of deterrence, at some point in time you talk of the issue of delegating authority from where at some point in time, in case the weapon has to be used, it has to be used by the armed forces, not by the scientists.

But here is where we come into a kind of a block in this country. Whether it be the case of chemical weapons whether it be the case of missiles, whether it be the case of strategic weapons which have a strategic element, there is a reluctance in the political system to incorporate the armed forces into the decision making. This area of civil military relations in this country does require more attention. The relations have been, I should not say that they are troubled in that sense or they have been kind of difficult. But, anyone, any observer who interacts both with the civilians and the military bureaucracy in the South Block knows that there is a wall dividing them, there is a complete iron curtain dividing them and there is a state of civil war which obtains at any time.

This is not a happy situation and this is a situation which must be overcome. Because in the nuclear era there is very little room for error, there is very little room for making mistakes, there is very little room for turf battle etc., and specially when we are talking of a very minimal

nuclear deterrent because in this kind of a situation, there is a need to focus attention in these areas.

I will stop here in the interest of keeping some time for discussion with the participants here.

Thank you very much!

## SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

Pokhran II and its repercussions has been agitating the minds of many thinkers. It has received extensive coverage in the media. Both appear to have been largely misled by the Western media blitzkrieg, and primarily due to ill advised secrecy and silence clamped by the Government on this subject for many decades. Very few really know the history of how things developed over a long period. The compulsions and implications of India's nuclearisation, of the Pokhran II tests have not been adequately understood. Domestic debate on the subject has mostly gone at a tangent. However, public support and acclaim for these tests has been overwhelming.

The Seminar/Panel Discussion has therefore been very timely. It evoked a very enthusiastic and animated response. The main speakers/panelists since long have been studying, examining and researching comprehensively and propagating national security concerns. They brought in a wealth of information to the discerning seminar participants who asked pertinent and searching questions, made relevant comments and felt enlightened on the subject of the seminar. At the end a general consensus emerged on the following lines :-

- Successive governments and leaders of various political parties did not take the country and even their own parties or the Armed Forces into confidence while pursuing the nuclear policy.
- Pakistan went covertly nuclear in 1987 and India perhaps by early 1990. They have been living in this nuclear ambiguous environment since then.
- Nuclearisation did not result in arms race. In fact India's defence expenditure has gone down during last eight years.
- Nuclearisation did not result in increase of Indo-Pak tensions inspite of Pakistan's undeclared war in Kashmir for the last eight years.
- Many questions agitating people's minds on nuclearisation arise due to their being kept ignorant of the facts of the situation. Their protests too are based on gross ignorance.

- Our media is dominated by Western thinking and has been unable to effectively counter the distortion of facts by the powerful western media.
- The western media paints a picture of reduction of nuclear weapons and the world moving towards disarmament and faults Indian nuclearisation. The actual facts are otherwise.
- The international community on 12 may 95 indefinitely extended the Non-Proliferation Treaty and legitimised the hegemony of the five warprone Nuclear Weapon states, who are the permanent members of the UN Security Council. The international community surrendered its right even to protest, and foreswore nuclear option.
- The comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) was neither comprehensive nor a test ban treaty. It was delinked with disarmament and permitted laboratory tests and weapon refinement/upgradation by the U.S. India's refusal to sign the CTBT was frowned upon and severely criticised by the nuclear hegemon and their docile camp followers.
- China supported by Britain and Russia violating international law surreptitiously tried to bring India within the NPT and CTBT fold and even got the UN resolution passed to this effect. This manoeuvre was outflanked by India by first blocking the move and then by the nuclear tests in May, 1998.
- Time and again India was refused the nuclear umbrella. The threatening security environment and primarily national security considerations compelled India to conduct the nuclear tests in May, 1998.
- The Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe gives nuclear cover to 54 member nations - all white. The US has bilateral security arrangement with Japan, Australia and New-Zealand. China is a nuclear power. All white and yellow nations have the nuclear cover. It is only the brown and black which are without this cover and efforts are on to declare them as nuclear weapon free zone, the cover proposed to be provided by the overlord nuclear

hegemons.

- Pakistan received clandestine Chinese support for its nuclear and missiles programme possibly with US connivance.
- Chinese assistance to Pakistan's nuclearisation appears to be for counterveiling India, keeping it enmeshed and forestalling its emergence as a global and a strong regional actor.
- India requires nuclear weapons to deter nuclear weapon threats. It must equip itself to retaliate, and must have a minimum deterrent capability.
- India's no first use declaration is based on its culture and tradition and also the commitment it made in the United Nations.
- Minimum deterrence must have aircraft delivered nuclear war head capability, land based as well as sea based missile delivery capability. At present, the weapon's range should cover Pakistan as well as China with whom we have territorial disputes.
- No first use requires the ability to survive a nuclear attack and promptly counter attack, for which an effective Command and Control system must be in place.
- Sea based deterrent is likely to take time, the land based, a little time and aircraft based deterrent already exists.
- Disarmament is not on the agenda of the five nuclear weapon states. India having acquired a nuclear weapon status is in a better position to persuade and goad these NW states towards world nuclear disarmament. Till this is achieved, the nuclear status provides insurance for national security.
- There is reluctance in the political system to incorporate the armed forces into decision making. This requires to be urgently remedied.

**SEMINAR "NUCLEAR INDIA AND THE WORLD"  
(8st September, 1998)**

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**

- |   |        |
|---|--------|
| 1. Prof Dr VG Bhide                     | - CASS |
| 2. Air Mshl (Retd) S. Kulkarni          | - CASS |
| 3. Gp Capt (Retd) S.G. Chitnis          | - CASS |
| 4. Vice Adm Arun Prakash                | - CASS |
| 5. Shri PB Kulkarni                     | - CASS |
| 6. Shri VL Date                         | - CASS |
| 7. Gp Capt(Retd) JR Kirloskar           | - CASS |
| 8. Shri SG Ranade                       | - CASS |
| 9. Gp Capt (Retd) SR Purandare          | - CASS |
| 10. Wg Cdr (Retd) SD Karnik             | - CASS |
| 11. Brig (Retd) AA Wagh                 | - CASS |
| 12. Maj Gen (Retd) SG Pitre             | - CASS |
| 13. Lt Gen DB Shekatkar                 | - CASS |
| 14. Shri MD Khandke,<br>Pune MGMT ASSN. | - CASS |
| 15. Urmilla A Tupe                      | - CASS |
| 16. Anuradha Shinde                     | - CASS |
| 17. Maj Saurabh Kumar                   | - CASS |
| 18. Maj Gen Vinod Chhibber              | - CASS |
| 19. Dr (Mrs) KV Menon                   | - CASS |
| 20. Dharmavir Singh Mahida              | - CASS |
| 21. Gp Capt (Retd) H Kaushual           | - CASS |
| 22. Brig (Retd) AN Sirpurkar            | - CASS |
| 23. Air Cmde (Retd) SV Dabadghao        | - CASS |
| 24. Brig (Retd) NB Grant                | - CASS |
| 25. Dr. Rajesh M Basrur                 | - CASS |
| 26. Flt Lt R Muthuvel                   | - CASS |



27. Maj JS Sokmi - CASS
28. Sqn Ldr KPS Virk - CASS
29. Flt Lt R Sahoo - CASS
30. Lt Parambr Singh - CASS
31. Lt VS Harke - CASS
32. Capt Sanjeev Kumar - CASS
33. Lt VS Gupta - CASS
34. Lt Cdr AD Singh - CASS
35. Gp Capt S Srivastava - CASS
36. Air Cmde AM Shahane - CASS
37. Shri Harish Bhargava - CASS
38. Gp Capt Ajit Tyagi - CASS
39. Shri Bhagwan Joshi - CASS
40. Brig (Retd.) DA Paranjape - CASS
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43. Wg Cdr (Retd) SC Bhakay
44. Cdr (Retd) SP Taneja
45. Cdr (Retd) LS Mehta
46. Wg Cdr (Retd) AT Thakur
47. Miss Natu
48. Mrs. Gita Vir
49. Capt, IN (Retd) Rajan Vir
50. Shri Satish Pradhan
51. Shri Gaurang Pradhan
52. Brig (Retd) SB Jambusarwalla
53. Shri VP Salunke (Sakal Papers)
54. Gp Capt BR Chaudhary
55. Col TS Sekhon
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64. Maj Gen (Retd) AV Natu
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66. Maj (Retd) MN Joshi
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68. Prof BG Deshpande
69. Shri Tushar Arun Amin
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72. Shri Mandar Kulkarni
73. Kishor V Tarkhedkar
74. Priyadarsni Bhattacharya

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## CASS PUBLICATIONS

### SEMINAR PROCEEDINGS

	Date of Seminar
1. "Defence and Industry"	17 May 93.
2. "Use of Force in Internal Peace Keeping"	04 Dec. 93.
3. "The Emergence of China : Political, Economic and Military Implications for India"	22-23 Nov.94.
4. "Human Rights : Law and Order in India"	30 Sep. 95.
5. "The Emerging Security Environment in South East Asia with Special Reference to Myanmar : Political, Economic and Military Implication for India"	2-3 Dec.95.
6. "Challenges to India's National Security And India's Defence Preparedness"	20-21 Apr. 96
7. "Challenges of Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Implications for India"	28 Aug. 96.
8. "Preparing to Meet Challenges to National Security In the 21st Century - The Organisational Dimension."	30 Jan. 97.
9. "Regional Security Environment To The North- West of India With Special Reference To Afghanistan."	21-22 Mar. 97
10. "Information Warfare"	24 Sep. 97
11. "Laws of War"	09 Jan. 98
12. "Indian Ocean - The Challenges Ahead"	06-07 Mar.98
13. "Pokhran II and its Implications"	01 Sep. 98
14. "Nuclear India and the World"	08 Sep. 98

### OTHER PUBLICATIONS

	Date of Publication
1. "The First SLK Memorial Lecture" by Shri P. Chidambaram, Union Minister for Commerce.	Jun. 95.
2. "India 2020 : An Agenda for the Nation" by Maj Gen (Retd) KS Pendse.	Feb. 96.
3. "India : The Nuclear Challenge" by Lt Gen (Retd) EA Vas, Maj Gen (Retd) KS Pendse, Dr. Col (Retd) AA Athale.	Mar. 96.
4. "Second SLK Memorial Lecture" by Dr. P.C. Alexander, Governor of Maharashtra "Citizens Rights and Indian Democracy"	Jul. 96.
5. "Third SLK Memorial Lecture" by Justice A.M. Ahmadi, Former Chief Justice of India "Changing Scenario of The Constitutional Values"	Aug. 97.
6. "Fourth SLK Memorial Lecture" by Dr. Abid Hussain, Vice Chairman, RGICS Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Contemporary Studies "The Changing Pattern of India's Relations with America"	Jul. 98.