
India-Pakistan Nuclear Doctrines: A Comparative Analysis



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Abstract

The nuclear policies of India and Pakistan are consistent with their longstanding acrimonious relations. This is reflected in their respective nuclear doctrines. Both states also use their nuclear policies to frame their relations with other states regarding development and use of their nuclear weapons. The nature of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear postures reflects their differences in the deployment of nuclear weapons in wartime or peace. Pakistan follows a credible minimum deterrence policy. It relies on maintaining the minimum number of nuclear warheads sufficient to deter India. However, its authorisation process is often criticised. India follows a broader strategy to counter China. It includes the development of missile defence and second-strike capability through sea-based nuclear forces. This contradicts its stance of credible minimum deterrence. The documented Indian nuclear doctrine presents a dichotomy in policies and actions and demonstrates a vague picture of its objectives and goals. The evolution in the nuclear policies of India and Pakistan requires them to elaborate their nuclear doctrines in order to make them transparent and reduce the ambiguities in the operationalisation of their policies.

Key Words; *credible minimum deterrence, transparency, NCA, NFU, cold start*

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Introduction

The security strategy of a state entails all possible options for it to maintain and propagate its national security objectives. These options include both conventional and nuclear resources. Nuclear weapons give a state a clear edge over the adversaries that do not have nuclear weapons. However, the possession of nuclear weapons demands a greater level of responsibility in terms of state behaviour in international relations. So states seek to adopt a nuclear policy that serves the national security objectives but at the same time does not threaten other states that do not have a direct conflict with it. In other words, the nuclear policy of a state is meant to deter a potential threat from any other state. The nuclear doctrine implies the policy of a state regarding nuclear weapon use and their role in the overall strategy.

There is a difference between nuclear posture and nuclear doctrine. Nuclear posture is related to strategy while the nuclear doctrine is a policy document regarding the development and employment of nuclear weapons in times of peace and war. The nuclear doctrine includes certain rules and principles which a state implies according to its nuclear policy. These rules and principles do not explain how nuclear weapons would be deployed. It only indicates the redlines of a state after which nuclear weapons use may become inevitable.¹ On the other hand, the nuclear posture indicates the level of deployment of nuclear weapons according to the level of threat through a prescribed strategy developed in line with the nuclear doctrine.

The nuclear doctrine of a state concentrates and focuses on its nuclear policy regarding efficient employment and management of its nuclear forces. It develops the strategy about the use, purpose, and situations in which nuclear weapons can be utilised. Command and control system pertaining to this policy makes sure that these weapons are being employed according to policy. In other words, the nuclear doctrine helps the state to describe its nuclear policy towards

other states in case any ambiguity prevails regarding its nuclear weapons and policy. Moreover, it facilitates a state to have strict control over the authorisation of deployment procedures. A well-stated nuclear doctrine elaborates the purpose, vitality, and the conditions for use of nuclear weapons.²

India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998. Since then they have been continuously increasing quantitative and qualitative capabilities in nuclear development. Pakistan does not have a well-documented comprehensive nuclear doctrine. On the other hand, India has produced two documents presented as its nuclear doctrine. A draft nuclear doctrine was announced by India in 1999, which included the preconditions for the deployment of nuclear forces and outlined the circumstances for the possible nuclear use.³ This was followed by another document in 2003, which updated the components of the doctrine.

The official statements of both states also indicate their nuclear doctrines. For Pakistan, the statements by the Foreign Office, ministers for defence, heads of state, government press releases of the National Command Authority, and the statements by the Director General Strategic Plans Division (SPD) and the army chief have outlined the basic characteristics of its nuclear doctrine.⁴ It constitutes the overall policy of Pakistan regarding nuclear weapons, which stipulates that it is to deter any external aggression that jeopardises Pakistan's security and is considered a threat to its strategic forces.⁵ The nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan have kept on evolving with the changing geostrategic situation of the region.

The purpose of this study is to analyse the nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan. For that, it is important to understand doctrine, posture, and strategy. The evolving nuclear policy has certain ramifications for the strategic stability of the region. The analysis of requirements of nuclear doctrines in the South Asian context has led to the conclusion that the strategic environment of the region poses

challenges to the adoption of transparency in nuclear doctrines. Furthermore, Narendra Modi's reign in India has implications for deterrence stability owing to his belief in the possibility of a limited war without escalation into a nuclear exchange. This has resulted in confusion about the nuclear policy and nuclear doctrine of India. These factors are discussed in this study.

Historical Background

India and Pakistan share over half a century of animosity. Their relationship since independence in 1947 has been one ranging from mutual mistrust to times of armed conflict. Pakistan considers India a major external threat to its security and this security dilemma has been the primary driver of its nuclear weapons development. The two states have fought three wars in 1948, 1965, and 1971 and engaged in limited conflicts in 1999 2001-2002 and heightened tensions in 2008 after Mumbai attacks, Pathankot incident, and the most recent Uri attack of 2016. There have been frequent skirmishes across the Line of Control (LOC), and the border between India and Pakistan. India has been accusing Pakistan of its involvement in terrorist activities inside India. Pakistan has always sought friendly relations with India⁶ but India's desires of regional hegemony restrain it from developing peaceful relations with Pakistan.

India has been an aspirant of becoming a dominant power in South Asia. It has a large area, population, industry, economy, and conventional and nuclear war power. On the other hand, Pakistan has faced asymmetry in all these factors vis-à-vis India.⁷ However, nuclear weapons have neutralised the threat from conventional superiority of India and also ensured a sense of stability in the region in terms of power balance.⁸ Pakistan started its nuclear program when India conducted its first nuclear test in 1974 at the Pokhran desert site. The security situation of the region has been dynamic and evolving since then and so are the nuclear policies of both the states. The evolving security dimensions have increased the sense of mistrust while the

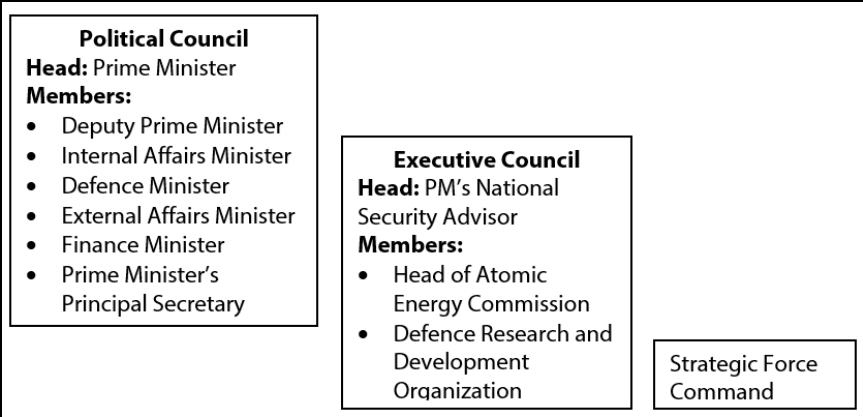
divergent nuclear policies have only put the stability of the region at risk.

Evolution of the Indian Nuclear Doctrine

After the Indian nuclear tests, the first policy document was released in 1999 under the National Security Advisory Board. It was headed by Brajesh Mishra who was the then National Security Adviser of India.⁹ The official nuclear doctrine was subsequently released in 2003. It was a brief document containing provisions for establishing a command and control structure for nuclear weapons.¹⁰ According to this document, the Nuclear Command Authority (NCA) was given the mandate of nuclear decision making.¹¹ NCA is a two-layered body consisting of an Executive Council and a Political Council. The Prime Minister chairs the Political Council, which is empowered with the authority to decide about the use of nuclear weapons. The chairman of the Executive Council is the Prime Minister's National Security Adviser.¹² This Council provides input to the Political Council regarding strategic affairs and also implements the decisions of the Political Council.¹³

The overall administration of strategic forces is done by the commander-in-chief of the Strategic Forces Command. The doctrine also outlined that there must be a reasonable amount of civilian staff and nuclear and missile experts from the Nuclear Energy Commission and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). Historically, there has been a rift between the forces and the headquarters for control of strategic arsenal. So this composition of strategic forces command neutralised the rift between the forces.¹⁴ The organisational diagram of the NCA appears in the following figure:

Figure 1:
The Organisation of the Indian Nuclear Command Authority (NCA)



Elements of Indian Nuclear Doctrine

Important characteristics of Indian nuclear draft doctrine are as given below:

1. India adheres to a policy of credible minimum nuclear deterrence.¹⁵
2. The primary objective of Indian nuclear weapons is to deter any threat to India and its forces. Furthermore, India will not start a nuclear strike but only use nuclear weapons as a response.¹⁶
3. India would only use nuclear weapons in retaliation.¹⁷
4. India will not threaten the non-nuclear states with nuclear weapons.¹⁸
5. India is committed to No-First-Use (NFU) of nuclear weapons.¹⁹
6. The credible minimum deterrence requires that:²⁰
 - (a) India maintains a minimum amount of nuclear forces that are operational and survivable,
 - (b) India has a full-bodied system of command and control of nuclear forces,
 - (c) India establishes early warning systems and response capabilities complemented by effective intelligence,

- (d) India maintains a comprehensive strategy and establishes a programme for the training of personnel to fulfil this strategy, and
 - (e) India shows persistence in the employment of nuclear forces when needed.
7. It has the mechanism to exercise control over the import and export of nuclear-related materials.²¹
 8. It would continue to observe the suspension of further tests of nuclear weapons.²²
 9. The doctrine also emphasises that India is committed to the objective of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and it will support any international treaty provided that it is verifiable and non-discriminatory.²³

Evolution of Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine

Pakistan does not have an officially declared nuclear doctrine. However, that does not imply that its nuclear policy has not evolved through time. Pakistan's nuclear doctrine has been dynamic and evolving. After the nuclear tests, it was imperative that some principles and rules of operation would be announced. Although Pakistan has not presented a formal documented nuclear doctrine, it has chalked out a nuclear use strategy that has been communicated through several official statements that account for its nuclear doctrine. Major General (retired) Mahmud Ali Durrani stated about the nuclear doctrine of Pakistan:

While Pakistan has not formally announced any nuclear doctrine, the President, Foreign Minister, and Foreign Secretary have mentioned on various occasions its main elements, such as restraint and responsibility, a minimum deterrent posture, avoidance of an arms race, non-use against non-nuclear states, and participation in universally

applicable non-discriminatory multilateral arms control negotiations.²⁴

He also stated:

The unofficial view of the Pakistani establishment was obtained through a series of meetings with senior policymakers within the Pakistan Army, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and at the highest level of the Strategic Plans Division (SPD), the military organisation that oversees almost all aspects of Pakistan's nuclear weapons program.²⁵

The nuclear doctrine defines the structure for nuclear weapons administering body and sets out rules and principles for command of strategic forces. Pakistan formulated its National Command Authority (NCA) in 2000, which is the highest body having the mandate to formulate policy and plan and implement the decisions regarding nuclear weapons. The Prime Minister heads this Authority. It consists of the Strategic Plans Division (SPD), which serves as the secretariat, and consists of the strategic force command of the three armed services.²⁶ There are two bodies working under the SPD:

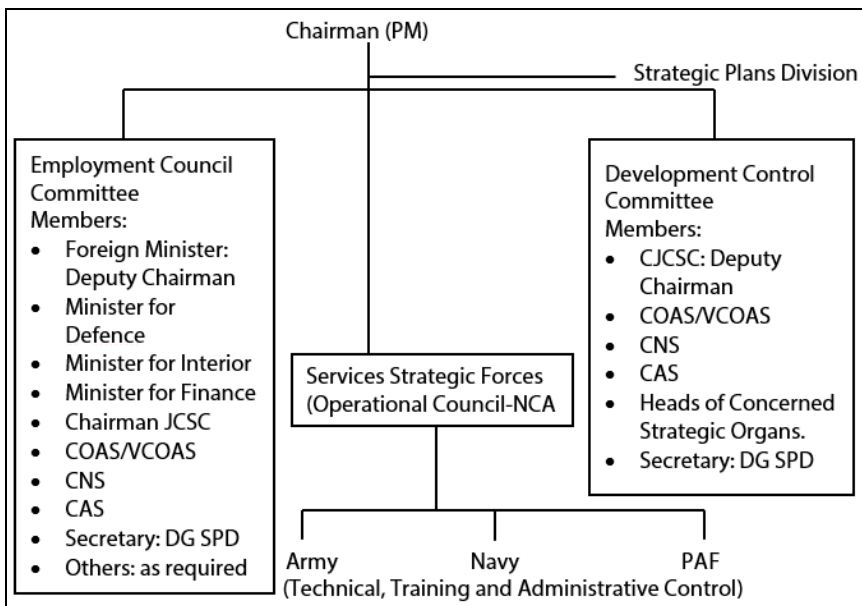
1. The Employment Control Committee (ECC), which is the main policymaking organ of the NCA and is headed by the Prime Minister; and
2. The Development Control Committee (DCC), which implements the policy decisions of the NCA.²⁷

The Strategic Plans Division (SPD) oversees the implementation of strategic decisions and the development of strategic forces.²⁸ The Strategic Force Command consists of three forces: army, navy, and air force. The respective services commands have their control over administrative and technical aspects. However, policy decisions are taken by the NCA under advice from the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee.²⁹ The army strategic force command

possesses ballistic and cruise missiles, while the air force strategic command has the aircraft capable of delivering nuclear weapons. The naval strategic force command was the last to be established in 2012³⁰ and there is no public information as to whether they already have nuclear delivery systems and weapons or whether this capability is still evolving.³¹ The organisational diagram of Pakistan's NCA is shown in the following figure:

Figure 2:

Pakistan's National Command Authority (NCA)



The ultimate decision to use nuclear weapons remains centralised and it has a significant civilian authorisation in the body. In a statement by the NCA on 6 January 2003, it was announced that no individual is authorised to take the nuclear use decision; rather this decision would be taken through unanimous authorisation.³²

Indo-Pak crises in 2001-2002 also became an instrument in the evolution of Pakistan nuclear doctrine as the crisis brought both states to the brink of a nuclear confrontation. Pervez Musharraf, former president of Pakistan, once said, "Nuclear weapons are the last resort. I

am optimistic and confident that we can defend ourselves with conventional means, even though the Indians are buying up the most modern weapons in megalomaniac frenzy."³³ He also said, "nuclear weapons could be used, if Pakistan is threatened with extinction, then the pressure of our countrymen would be so big that this option, too, would have to be considered. In a crisis, nuclear weapons also have to be part of the calculation."³⁴

Elements of Pakistan's Nuclear Doctrine

The official press statements of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) and interviews with Director General SPD, Army Chief, and other relevant officials of the ruling elite largely determine Pakistan's nuclear doctrine. Importantly, the majority of its components are veiled in secrecy.³⁵ Some characteristics of the Pakistan nuclear doctrine are as given below:

1. The nuclear policy of Pakistan is directed at addressing the threat from India and Pakistan's nuclear deterrence is Indo-centric.³⁶ Pakistan is compelled to react to India's actions in the South Asian security environment. So Pakistan's nuclear doctrine seeks to deter Indian nuclear threats and counter India's conventional and nuclear aggression.
2. Pakistan follows the credible minimum deterrence policy and does not desire to indulge in an arms race with India.³⁷ Pakistan seeks Full Spectrum Deterrence in line with the Credible Minimum Deterrence policy,³⁸ according to the dynamic security environment of the region. This policy does not imply the overall deterrent capability that would encompass everything. Rather it manifests the minimum deterrence power enough to cater to evolving security threats. At the same time, Pakistan would not hesitate to deter all types of threats and aggression whether internal or external while maintaining the capability of full-spectrum deterrence.

3. Pakistan maintains a first-use option and has established a reliable C4I network (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence).³⁹ To counter any threat to its security and defence, Pakistan would not be reluctant to use the nuclear option. The first-use option is financially affordable to build and manage for Pakistan. It also seeks to balance Pakistan's conventional differences with India as the regional security environment forced Pakistan to maintain the balance with India.
4. All the decision-making regarding deployment, employment, and policy would be done through NCA.⁴⁰ It maintains that there must be a network of safety and security features established to guarantee control over nuclear assets. All the organs of the NCA work in accordance with nuclear policy and in coordination with each other in this regard.
5. The nuclear assets of Pakistan are safe, secure, and under strict control to avoid unintended or accidental use.⁴¹ It shows that being a responsible nuclear weapon state, Pakistan is very much committed to the robust control of strategic weapons. Through NCA, Pakistan has established a foolproof security system for nuclear assets. So there is no danger of accidental or unauthorised use of nuclear weapons.
6. Pakistan supports nuclear-weapon-free zone treaties in Latin America, the South Pacific, and South Africa. This means that Pakistan would not threaten, deploy, or use nuclear weapons there.⁴²

A Comparative Analysis

India and Pakistan have different strategic compulsions. Both have their peculiar security preferences and their nuclear weapons cater to their very strategic needs. Their nuclear policies differ in focus as Pakistan's nuclear policy revolves around India only whereas India has a broader spectrum that includes China as a major adversary.

These differences in strategic and nuclear policies are very important to keep in mind when analysing the nuclear doctrines of both countries.

Indo-Centric/Sino Centric

The threat perception of Pakistan emanates from India. Pakistan faces an existential security dilemma vis-à-vis India. India and Pakistan have never been able to have friendly relations. There is a huge asymmetry in the conventional capabilities of India and Pakistan. This has led to the development of nuclear weapons by Pakistan in response to Indian nuclear development. So Pakistan's nuclear doctrine elaborates that the purpose of its nuclear weapons is to deter India only, whereas India has to deter Pakistan as well as China. Therefore, its nuclear doctrine caters to the Chinese threat also. In that case, Pakistan cannot match India in terms of firepower and nuclear warheads. India is determined to acquire the triad of nuclear forces consisting of army, navy, and airforce.⁴³ As far as Indian ambitions are concerned, it seeks regional hegemony and wants to overcome China in this competition by developing more sophisticated weapons and their delivery systems. So, it can be said that the nuclear policy of Pakistan is to deter India and India seeks to deter China. India has cold relations with China and wants to curtail the latter's influence in the South Asian region. The strategic rivalry for regional hegemony further compels India to enhance its nuclear forces. To compete with China's influence and nuclear capabilities, India intends to increase its ties with the world powers. In this regard, its cooperation with the US and Russia is increasing particularly.

India is growing its military potential and developing ties with the US to get access to the latest weapons systems in order to increase its power and stature in world politics. In the last twenty years, India has become the main importer of US weapons and ammunition.⁴⁴ India has become a major strategic partner of the US and the weapons sales have been amounting to \$8 billion since 2001. The US is

supplying the most sophisticated military hardware to India.⁴⁵ According to the analysis of Mansoor Jaffar (Editor of *Al Arabiya Urdu* based in Islamabad):

To limit China's influence in the region, the U.S. has embarked upon the strategy to promote India as its major military partner in Asia and South East Asia. Washington is trying to rearrange a military alliance comprising India, South Korea, Japan, Australia and Singapore to make enemies feel its undeniable presence in the region, and friends receive a strong message against giving up her American ties. To achieve the same objectives, the U.S. held joint naval exercises in the Indian Ocean in 2007 with India, Australia, Japan and Singapore to give a clear message to China. The friendly naval relations between Delhi and Washington were established after the Tsunami relief operations in late 2004 and both countries entered into a new strategic defense framework agreement in 2005.⁴⁶

Although India has not bought any nuclear reactor from the United States under this agreement, its benefits have been measured by improvements in diplomatic, military, and economic relations between India and the United States. *Times of India* has reported that during Modi's visit to the United States in June 2016, both states agreed on the construction of six nuclear reactors in India by the American company Westinghouse.⁴⁷ This agreement, in fact, has opened the doors of nuclear trade for India.

Perhaps the biggest advantage that India has yielded out of this strategic partnership is the US support for India in the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) that has enabled it to not only trade with the United States but also with other nuclear technology exporters like Japan. The US has assured India of its support for its entry into the NSG as a member.⁴⁸

The Indo-US nexus has another dimension, i.e., to curtail Chinese influence in global politics as well as the regional security framework. India has agreed to the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMAO) and Defense Technology Trade Initiative (DTTI) with the US to foster defence ties.⁴⁹

Delivery Systems

The Indian nuclear doctrine manifests that the Indian nuclear forces will be triad based.⁵⁰ In addition to nuclear forces, its strategy also focuses on conventional weapons. This allows India to raise the threshold of conventional conflict but also gives it leverage to avoid conventional warfare due to nuclear deterrence. This is a dangerous proposition because any conventional attack on an adversary having nuclear weapons poses a serious risk.⁵¹ Pakistan follows the total war policy in terms of nuclear weapons delivery systems. Its delivery system comprises of the air force and ballistic missile system of army.⁵²

Based on the conventional military power of India, it has been developing an offensive cold start doctrine in order to wage a limited war against Pakistan without escalation of the conflict to the nuclear level. The primary objective of this doctrine is to instantly mobilise integrated battle groups placed near the Pakistani border and launch a pre-emptive strike in order to capture territory and destroy forward military installations of Pakistan. The quick action is the key to this strategy because it is deemed to be successful only if it is done within 72 hours without affording any time to Pakistan to react and before the international community is involved.⁵³

In order to sustain its missile capacity, India has been developing its Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system. Pakistan's Indo-centric approach pushed it to the response of developing short-range missiles. To respond to the Indian Cold Start doctrine and to sustain its minimum nuclear deterrence, Pakistan has developed its short-range missiles Hatf-IX. It has the capability to carry any type of warhead either conventional or nuclear. This short-range missile system, along

with the medium- and long-range missiles, has neutralised the effects of instability in the region imposed by Indian cold start strategy and BMD system.⁵⁴

Continuous innovation and modernisation of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear forces is taking place. However, it is important that they do not follow the pattern of arms race because there is no effort to match the number of warheads or missiles; rather Pakistan's nuclear development is in response to Indian strategic enhancements. There are four innovations of nuclear forces that have changed the strategic environment of the region:

1. Cruise missiles;
2. Short-range tactical nuclear weapons;
3. Sea-based nuclear deterrence; and
4. Ballistic missile defence (BMD) system.⁵⁵

India plans to operationalise its sea-based deterrence in the near future with the trials of nuclear submarines already underway.⁵⁶ The Indian strategic advantage because of its larger size, a stronger economy, and industrial strength further enhance its superiority and intentions to have a triad-based delivery system. In this regard, Pakistan will have to seek collaboration with other states, particularly China, to compete with India.

Indian Cold Start and Pakistan's Warfighting Doctrine

In April 2004, Indian armed forces developed the cold start doctrine, which is a Pakistan specific strategy aimed at destroying Pakistani armed forces.⁵⁷ In the South Asian security environment, Indian cold start doctrine has increased regional instability. It seeks to hold Indian superiority in conventional forces. The objective of this strategy is to instigate a conventional attack on Pakistan in order to cause significant damage to its army and economic infrastructure before the intervention of the international community.⁵⁸

In response to the Indian cold start doctrine, Pakistan has been conducting warfighting exercises since 2009 as a result of which

Pakistan has operationalised a new concept of warfighting, which would pre-empt Indian cold start and respond to it. This response entails an overall combined response from all the forces.⁵⁹ The main distinction of this concept is that it can nullify the promptness of Indian cold start doctrine by enabling Pakistani troops to mobilise quickly in lesser time than India.

The development of tactical weapons by Pakistan is a worrisome factor for India. On 24 April 2013, Shyam Saran, the former chairman of the Indian National Security Advisory Board opined that Pakistan's short-range tactical missiles are an attempt to restrict India from conventionally responding to terrorists operating across the border. He alleged that tactical nuclear weapons enabled Pakistan to carry out its cross border terrorism activities with impunity.⁶⁰ He termed it as nuclear blackmail as if Pakistan responded to a conventional strike with the tactical weapons, it would annihilate the whole region. He declared that "[I]f [India] is attacked with such [tactical nuclear] weapons, it would engage in nuclear retaliation which will be massive and designed to inflict unacceptable damage on its adversary."⁶¹ Such a security environment in the region can result in the outbreak of a war between two states having sophisticated weapons systems in their possession.

India has always associated terrorist activities in India and Kashmir with Pakistan. The Modi government brought about a paradigm shift in the strategy and pursued a more aggressive approach, which has banked on the limited war concept. In September 2016, twenty soldiers were killed in an attack on an Indian army post in the Uri sector of Kashmir. India has claimed that it carried out surgical strikes inside Pakistan territory and destroyed militant hideouts. Pakistan denied any such event and declared it as an exchange of fire across the line of control.⁶² While there are no solid proofs for such Indian claims, Modi has been quite successful in diplomatically propagating its policy and maligning Pakistan at international forums.

The Policy of Nuclear First Use and NFU

The Indian nuclear doctrine indicates that it adheres to the policy of “NFU”. Whereas Pakistan’s nuclear doctrine maintains that it would resort to nuclear use if its national integrity is jeopardised. According to Rifaat Hussain:

Given Indian advantage in conventional forces, Islamabad cannot commit itself to a policy of no nuclear first use (NFU). Doing so would only make it safe for India to fight a conventional war with Pakistan with impunity. Banning use of force between India and Pakistan is a more realistic approach towards conflict prevention than NFU declarations.⁶³

However, Pakistan would only opt for the first use of nuclear weapons if it is faced with the following situation:⁶⁴

1. If Indian forces penetrate into Pakistani territory beyond a specific limit;
2. If India captures Lahore or any other city of strategic or economic importance;
3. If India is able to destroy an unacceptable level of the conventional military force of Pakistan;
4. An Attack on any strategic asset or dams or civilian nuclear installation that jeopardises its military or economic security including Chashma, Mangla, Tarbela, and Kahuta;
5. If Pakistan is strangled so adversely that it seriously affects its warfighting capability; or
6. Indian advances for the capture of territory in Kashmir.

Elaborating the conditions of use of nuclear weapons clearly, the former DG SPD Lt Gen (Retd.) Khalid Kidwai has stated that Pakistan would think about using nuclear weapons only “if the very

existence of Pakistan as a state is at stake.”⁶⁵ According to him, “it is well known that Pakistan does not have a ‘No First Use Policy.’ Nuclear weapons are aimed solely at India. In case that deterrence fails, they will be used if:”⁶⁶

- India captures a major territory of Pakistan;
- If Pakistan’s forces, i.e., army or air force is significantly destroyed;
- India tries to economically strangle Pakistan and destroys its industrial base; or
- Political destabilisation is caused by India which results in an internal security risk.

During the crises of Brasstacks 1986-87, the Kargil 1999, and the 2001-2002 confrontation, India abstained from escalating the conflict with Pakistan because of the fear of Pakistan’s nuclear response. If India attacked, Pakistan could have retaliated with conventional forces.

Proposal for a Nuclear Restraint Regime

Pakistan has proposed several regional mechanisms to improve relations between the two states. The proposal of Nuclear Restraint Regime was also an attempt to offer a confidence-building measure to India. Although Pakistan’s proposal for a nuclear restraint regime seems logical, it is not practical in the South Asian context. India cannot accept a dialogue that does not address its security concerns with regard to China. Therefore, a broader global regime that also includes China into the equation would be more feasible and result-oriented.⁶⁷ Pakistan in principle supports the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty’s objectives and introduction of the Fissile Material Treaty. But Pakistan’s position with regard to its signing of any nuclear-related arms control and disarmament mechanism would be based on the conditions of national interest and the geostrategic environment of the region.

Credible Nuclear Deterrence

Pakistani and Indian nuclear doctrines demonstrate that both states follow policies of maintaining a deterrence that is credible and minimum, however, the emphasis on credible or minimum varies. Both credible and minimum are relative terms and keep on evolving. It is an intriguing question because what is the minimum number of nuclear weapons that is credible and what is the credibility of minimum numbers? And how to determine it? Considering the asymmetry in size and capabilities of India and Pakistan, it is very difficult to ascertain the exact number of weapons, which is minimum as well as credible. Having said that, it is clear from the nuclear doctrines that both the states are not seeking a nuclear arms race and their main emphasis is on the credibility of deterrence. Pakistan has stressed time and again that it does not seek to indulge in an arms race with India, however, it will adopt full-spectrum deterrence in order to deter any threat to its security. For the deterrence to work, its prompt and effective communication is very essential. For the first time, covert nuclear threat emanated from Pakistan during the crisis of Brasstacks in 1986-87. Abdul Qadir Khan indicated in a statement that Pakistan has the nuclear capability. He said, "Nobody can undo Pakistan.... We are here to stay and let it be clear that we shall use the bomb if our existence is threatened."⁶⁸

The Kargil crisis of 1999 resulted in the withdrawal of Indian and Pakistani forces due to the presence of nuclear deterrence in the region. Nuclear deterrence posture was calculated by both the states and they were openly exchanging nuclear threats during the crisis. This encouraged both states to avoid escalation. With the evolution of nuclear doctrines and postures, it became more evident during the 2001-02 India-Pakistan military standoff that could nearly produce a major war between them. At that time, both countries exchanged several nuclear threats that served as communicating the red lines for nuclear exchange. For example, the statement by General Pervez

Musharraf during the 2001-02 conflict was a clear warning to India, "We do not want war. But if war is thrust upon us, we would respond with full might, and give a befitting reply."⁶⁹ Nuclear deterrent forced the two sides to withdraw their forces. The existence of nuclear weapons did not eliminate crises but these were not converted into full-fledged wars under the nuclear umbrella.

Conclusion

Nuclear doctrines are intended to provide guidelines for states about the employment of weapons. Nuclear doctrines always have importance for the nuclear-weapon states, especially for Pakistan and India keeping in view the very short response times. With the nuclearisation of the states, it was imperative for them to delineate their nuclear postures. The nuclearisation of South Asia raised international concerns regarding nuclear proliferation and security of the facilities because of the adversarial relations between India and Pakistan. There is no transparent and comprehensive nuclear doctrine presented either by Pakistan or India. A comprehensive nuclear doctrine by India and Pakistan would contribute to deterrence stability in South Asia as both states are on the way to enhance their qualitative and quantitative nuclear weapons capabilities. Although India presented a draft doctrine and Pakistani policymakers have mentioned their nuclear policies on various occasions there is a need to present the officially endorsed and well-documented nuclear doctrine in order to eliminate ambiguities in the communication of their nuclear policies.

The nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan have evolved over time and would continue to evolve with the changing strategic dynamics of the region. History indicates that any nuclear development by India that disturbs the nuclear balance in the region prompts a response from Pakistan to neutralise the threat. The Indo-US strategic partnership has provided an advantageous position to India, which has strengthened its strategic capabilities, including

nuclear weapons, ballistic missiles, and missile defence potential. A former Indian intelligence official has reportedly stated, "Under the deal, India will get the capability to produce 50 warheads a year."⁷⁰

Similarly, the development of a ballistic missile defence system in South Asia by India challenged the regional stability because it can give India second-strike capability, which adds to the security dilemma of Pakistan. In response, while maintaining the indo-centric approach, Pakistan would either follow the same path that is unlikely considering the economic and technological conditions or it can go for an increase in its number of missiles with variable ranges. Such situations would further threaten regional stability.

It is important that both Pakistan and India document their doctrines. This would not only improve the strategic environment of the region but also contribute to the overall stability of the international system. The clearer the doctrines, the lesser would be the chance of ambiguities and it would also decrease the trust-deficit between them besides providing a systematic control over their nuclear arsenal. They must concentrate on and debate finalising their nuclear doctrines as it is a requisite of their nuclear weapon policy. It is vital that both the states should improve the negative control in addition to the positive control of their respective nuclear forces so that nuclear weapons will not be used mistakenly or in an unauthorised way.

It is high time that India and Pakistan take practical steps and start confidence-building measure that could lead to comprehensive negotiations including conventional and nuclear issues. In this regard, C Raja Mohan has outlined three possible strategies to improve the relations between India and Pakistan:⁷¹

1. The stabilisation of nuclear relationship through a commitment to the CBMs relating to regional cooperation;

2. Bring about transparency and predictability of military positions on the Line of Control and international borders; and
3. By using peace at the border, both states can develop interdependence.

However, these steps can only improve the conflict situation in the region and cannot eliminate the conflict itself. The nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan vary because their relative threat perceptions vary. While Pakistan has to counter India, India has to counter Pakistan as well as China. A comprehensive and well-elaborated nuclear doctrine that properly defines the objectives and conditions for the use of nuclear weapons can help improve transparency about nuclear policies as well as improve the strategic environment of the region. Although the nuclear policies of India and Pakistan keep on evolving, the documented doctrines can strengthen deterrence and relative command and control systems.

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