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**U.S. POLICY OPTIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA NOW THAT
THE NUCLEAR GENIE IS OUT OF THE BOTTLE**

BY

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ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: Steven E. Sloan
TITLE: U.S. Policy Options For South Asia Now That The Nuclear Genie Is Out Of The Bottle
FORMAT: Strategy Research Project
DATE: 10 April 2001 PAGES: 36 CLASSIFICATION: Unclassified

The world's nuclear nonproliferation aspirations for South Asia shattered when India and Pakistan both detonated nuclear devices in May 1998. For decades the United States followed policies crafted with the intent to deter these countries from advancing their nuclear weapons programs to the point of assembly and/or detonation. Current United States' policy views all nuclear proliferation as destabilizing and seeks to persuade both India and Pakistan from weaponizing or deploying nuclear weapons. This may not be achievable, nor may such aims best serve U.S. long-term interests in the region. Indian and Pakistan's nuclear weapons and the resulting deterrent effect may enhance regional stability so long as both states learn to control their arsenals. Global concerns over South Asia's nuclear programs appear to be based more on an assumed lack of sophisticated nuclear doctrine and command and control systems than concern over the weapons themselves. Regional security and U.S. interests could be advanced by developing stronger ties to both India and Pakistan, by assisting both governments to develop heightened control over arsenals and by using India's nuclear power as a natural counter balance to China's hegemonic designs.

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U.S. POLICY OPTIONS FOR SOUTH ASIA NOW THAT THE NUCLEAR GENIE IS OUT OF THE BOTTLE

The world's nuclear nonproliferation aspirations for South Asia shattered when India and Pakistan both detonated nuclear devices in May 1998. For decades the United States and other nations followed policies crafted to deter these countries from advancing their nuclear weapons programs to the point of assembly and/or detonation. These non-proliferation policies failed in South Asia. Having failed to deter the militarization of nuclear programs in India and Pakistan, the United States needs to reexamine its strategy and policy toward the region. A strategy aimed at preventing proliferation may have limited utility once proliferation occurs. A starting point in developing a new strategy might be to ask two questions: Is current U.S. policy enhancing stability in the Indian Subcontinent now that the nuclear genie is out of the bottle? Are U.S. interests being advanced under the current policy in South Asia?

BACKGROUND

GLOBAL NONPROLIFERATION EFFORTS

From the establishment of the UN Atomic Energy Commission in 1945, and the Baruch plan offered by the United States in 1946, the need to prevent and control the spread of nuclear weapons was universally accepted. As early as 1961, the UN General Assembly unanimously approved an Irish resolution calling on all states, but particularly the nuclear powers, to conclude an international agreement to refrain from transfer or acquisition of nuclear weapons.¹ Efforts throughout the 1960s to develop a regime to control nuclear weapons resulted in the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which opened for signature on 1 July 1968 and entered into force with the deposit of U.S. ratification on 5 March 1970.²

Two key provisions of the NPT sought to pacify the nuclear have-not's concerns over a permanent arrangement of the nuclear monopoly. First, Article V stipulates "potential benefits from any peaceful applications of nuclear explosions will be made available to non-nuclear weapon states party to the Treaty."³ And second, Article VI requires parties to the Treaty "to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a treaty on general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international control."⁴ In addition, Article X also states "Twenty-five years after entry into force of the Treaty, a conference shall be convened to decide whether the Treaty shall continue indefinitely, or shall be extended for an additional fixed period or periods. This decision shall be taken by a majority of the Parties to the Treaty."⁵ Despite the

provisions designed to induce all nations to sign on, a few states decided not to sign the NPT. Among the original non-signatories are India and Pakistan.

India, the de facto leader of the Non-Aligned Movement, served as a leading voice and strong critic in the debate with the declared nuclear states. For more than thirty years India consistently advocated global nuclear disarmament, convinced that a world without nuclear weapons would enhance both global and Indian security.⁶ While the nuclear weapon states -- defined by the NPT as any state that exploded a nuclear device prior to 1966 -- used the Nonproliferation Treaty as the vehicle to achieve nonproliferation, the non-nuclear weapon states viewed the treaty as inequitable. The non-nuclear weapon states wanted concessions from the nuclear powers before signing as non-nuclear weapon states. In spite of the provisions of Articles V⁷ and VI⁸ of the NPT intended to appease the have-nots, India decided not to sign the NPT. A United States nuclear umbrella guarantee also failed to persuade India to sign the NPT.

As the poorer of the two largest nations in South Asia, Pakistan realized a commitment to pursue nuclear weapons would be extremely costly. Thus, in the 1960s, Islamabad pursued a policy of making South Asia free of all nuclear weapons. India would not agree to a South Asian nuclear free zone (NFZ) unless China was included. In the late 1960s, during NPT negotiations, "Pakistan sought explicit security guarantees for all non-nuclear weapons states willing to sign the NPT against nuclear attack or blackmail from any quarter."⁹ The scope of the guarantee was too broad to be supported by the nuclear powers, and the proposal failed.

The NPT provided for review conferences every five years. At the 1995 NPT Review Conference participating nations praised progress being made on a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and decided to renew the treaty continuing five-year reviews indefinitely. At the 2000 NPT Review Conference,

There were widespread predictions that the Review Conference would fail and that the NPT itself might be in jeopardy. There was concern over India and Pakistan's 1998 nuclear tests, NPT violations by Iraq and North Korea, and criticism by Arab states of Israel's unsafeguarded nuclear program. Many believed that NPT nuclear weapons states (U.S., U.K., Russian, France, China) were not doing enough to reduce their stockpiles. The United States had been faulted for the Senate's failure to approve the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), the stalled START process, and for U.S. policy on national missile defense. Amid such wide-ranging views, it was not clear how NPT parties could reach common ground.¹⁰

Yet, the 2000 NPT Review Conference did succeed, and the U.S. was delighted with the outcome. Surprisingly, participating nations were able to adopt by consensus a substantive

Final Document that reviews implementation of the NPT over the past 5 years and establishes a program of action for the future. Following the conference, 187 nations signed-on. The NPT is nearly universally accepted today; only Cuba, India, Israel, and Pakistan remain as non-signatories. The NPT has restrained nuclear proliferation by establishing an international legal barrier to the acquisition of nuclear weapons and by authorizing inspections by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

REGIONAL SECURITY ISSUES

South Asia is a hostile region – a proverbial bad neighborhood. Open distrust and on-again, off-again simmering military, ethnic and religious conflicts among the major players characterize the region. India, Pakistan and China have border disputes that have simmered and occasionally flared for decades. Unrest in Afghanistan affects Pakistan directly. Conflicts abound among the less geopolitically significant nations in the region as well.

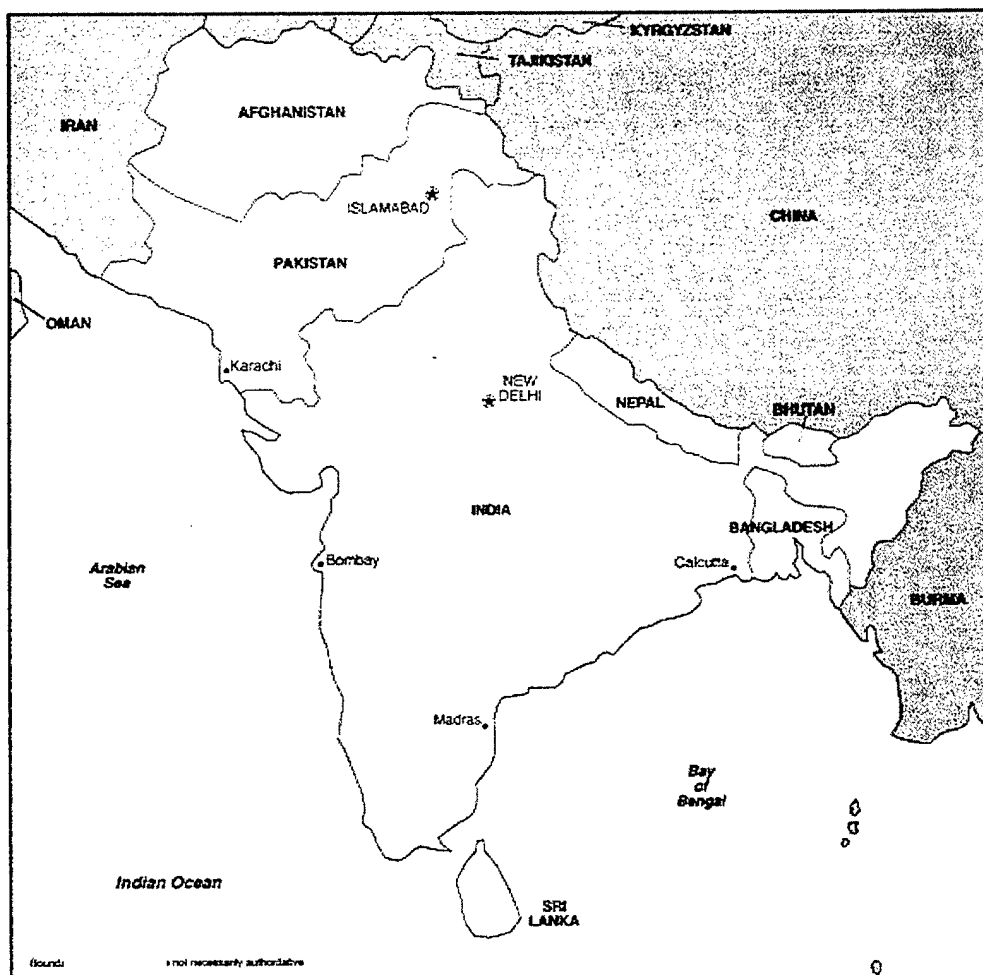


FIGURE 1: MAP OF SOUTH ASIA¹¹

The U.S. considers potential conflict between India and Pakistan as one of the top flashpoints in the world.¹² There have been armed forces sitting across a “line of control” in Kashmir for half a century. During that time there have been frequent skirmishes across the line, and now the situation is complicated by nuclear weapons.

Although the United States would like to include both India and Pakistan as friends, the U.S. has not had particularly close relations with either India or Pakistan for some time. For four decades U.S. interests and relations in the region were colored by Cold War politics. India was a military customer, if not an ally, of the former Soviet Union, and Indian policies seemed anti-American. The United States, therefore, was more closely allied with Pakistan during the Cold War due to common security interests –countering Soviet influence in Afghanistan and India. But close U.S. relations with Pakistan have unraveled since the end of the Cold War. Today, both India and Pakistan have expressed a desire for improved relations with the United States. However, relations with the U.S. do not dominate security interests for either nation. Concerns regarding each other’s intentions (and in India’s case, China’s intentions as well) drive security decisions. “The sources of past conflict continue to be part of the South Asian landscape.”¹³

NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND SOUTH ASIA

Historically, most of Asia (including South Asia) has regarded nuclear weapons as the “West vs. Asia” weapon and views the United States’ use of nuclear weapons against Japan as racist in motive.¹⁴ The U.S. bombing of Japan that forced Japan to unconditionally surrender at the end of World War II fostered a perception in the third world that nuclear weapons are instruments of terror by which the powerful can intimidate and blackmail the weak. As a result two attitudes prevail in Asia. Either all nations should renounce nuclear weapons, or any nation wishing to be taken seriously in world affairs must develop its own nuclear weapons.

In the 1940s many nations established atomic energy programs. The prevailing wisdom at the time was that atomic energy would have many uses, peaceful and otherwise. Often, these nascent atomic energy programs evolved into atomic weapons programs. China was the first Asian power to embark on a nuclear weapons project (in 1955) and the first to detonate a nuclear bomb in October 1964.¹⁵ India established the Indian Atomic Energy Commission in 1948, and completed its first research reactor in 1956. Having been totally humiliated in the 1962 border war with China, India immediately voiced concern over China’s nuclear weapons, and embarked on their own nuclear development project.¹⁶ There is some debate over the source of Pakistan’s nuclear technologies. One author concludes, “the Chinese, great practitioners of balance-of-power politics, responded (to India’s nuclear program) by providing

nuclear weapons designs and technology to India's arch-rival, Pakistan."¹⁷ Although China's role in Pakistan's nuclear program is debatable, it is certain that China has provided Pakistan nuclear delivery, missile technology.¹⁸

CHINA

China, while not strictly a South Asian nation, strongly influences – some might say dominates – security issues in the region due to the Indian – Chinese rivalry. For numerous reasons, most unrelated to South Asian concerns, China embarked on its nuclear weapons program in the late 1950s. First, the Korean War emboldened China to compete directly with the U.S., but persuaded Chinese leaders high-technology weaponry was needed. Second, the Taiwan Straits crisis of 1954-55 proved the need for nuclear weapons to counter U.S. influence in the region. And third, the Chinese were increasingly uncertain over the reliability of the Soviet Union's nuclear umbrella.¹⁹ China's new weapon combined with its conventional armed forces strength that defeated India in the 1962 war, caused alarm in India. Arguably, this combination was the direct stimulus leading to India's decision to embark on a nuclear weapons program.

INDIA

India wanted the five declared nuclear states to disarm, or at least make progress as required by Article VI of the NPT. When China exploded a nuclear device in 1964, India sought a joint nuclear guarantee from both the U.S. and USSR. The U.S. response was too vague for India's comfort. President Lyndon Johnson's noncommittal statement, "the U.S. would *consider* (emphasis added) defending non-communist states against communist states."²⁰

As years passed, India realized that to be considered a potential great power, and to address security concerns over Chinese power, it needed to possess nuclear capability. Thus, for reasons that included both security and domestic issues, India detonated a 12-kiloton "peaceful" nuclear explosion in 1974.²¹ Following the 1974 test, India maintained a "bombs-in-the-basement" posture for more than two decades. India would most likely have sustained this strategy in perpetuity were it not for three external pressures: India believed China was providing nuclear and missile technology to Pakistan; China's cementing of ties to the military regime in Myanmar; and the nonproliferation regime's attempt to foreclose India's nuclear option.²² In India's view the nonproliferation regime perpetuated the permanent monopoly of the five countries busily modernizing their arsenals by agreeing to an indefinite renewal of the NPT together with imposing a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty.

Viewed in the context of post-cold war nonproliferation efforts, Indian leaders thought they faced a Hobson's choice with respect to national security. With nuclear weapon states – China and Pakistan – along two long borders, a rising China, the military regime in Myanmar serving as a continuing threat, and no security assurances from another nuclear power²³, India had to insure its national security and followed its most logical policy – the nuclear option. The nuclear tests of 11 and 13 May 1998 were a continuation of policies in place since the earliest days of Indian independence.²⁴

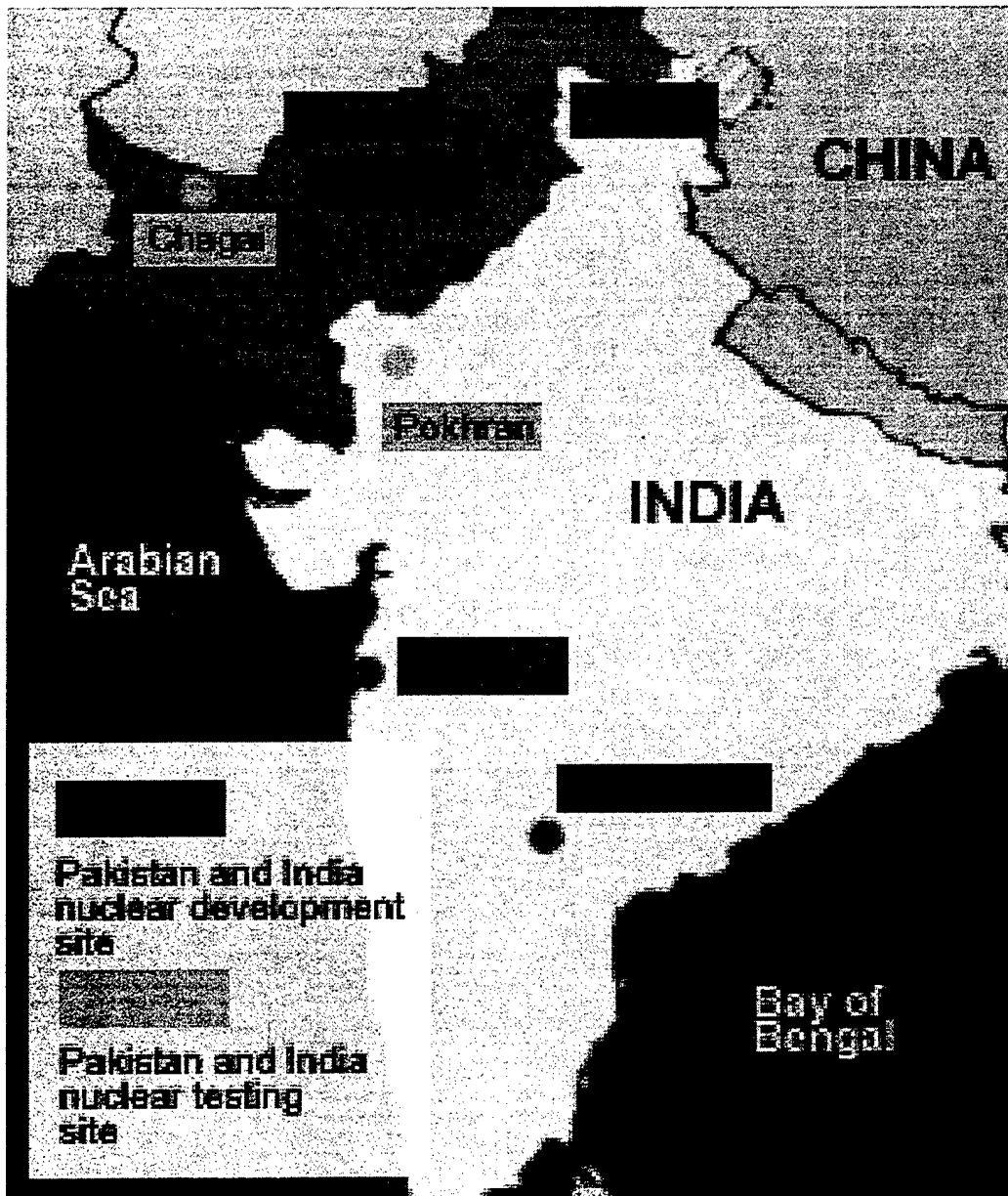


FIGURE 2: MAP OF SELECTED INDIAN & PAKISTANI NUCLEAR FACILITIES²⁵

India sees itself as a world leader deserving a permanent seat at the United Nations Security Council. It has always resented attempts at manipulation by the U.S., and often retaliated by thwarting U.S. interests in the U.N.²⁶ In the nonproliferation regime, India believed the U.S. was trying to bully India into permanent second tier status as a non-nuclear weapon state. India responded with nuclear explosions.

PAKISTAN

Despite intense diplomatic efforts by the United States, Pakistan responded to India's May 1998 tests by conducting their own nuclear tests on 28 and 30 May 1998.²⁷ The tests confirmed long-held suspicions of Pakistan's nuclear capabilities.

A relative late-bloomer, Pakistan established the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) in 1958. Pakistan acquired its first research reactor from the U.S. under the "Atoms for Peace" program in 1965.²⁸ Until 1972, the PAEC was given very low priority. Following Pakistan's humiliation in the 1971²⁹ war with India in which Pakistan was dismembered (its former eastern province became the independent state of Bangladesh),³⁰ Pakistan placed the PAEC under the direct control of the Prime Minister and launched its nuclear program in earnest. The 1971 war convinced Pakistan that Indian military forces were superior and that no outside power (principally the U.S. or China) would come to their aid. Therefore, "Pakistan required nuclear weapons to offset its conventional military vulnerability and its lack of foreign protection."³¹ Additionally, Pakistan felt more vulnerable because India and the Soviet Union signed a friendship pact in 1971.

^x In 1986, India conducted a major multi-service military exercise called "Brass Tacks." Pakistan, unable to ascertain whether India was mobilizing for combat or merely exercising as it claimed, had the head of the PAEC, Abdul Qadeer Kahn, announce Pakistan's nuclear weapons capability to an Indian reporter during an interview while Brass Tacks was in progress.

On 11 May 1998, India detonated a nuclear explosive device, its first such test since 1974. India conducted a total of five explosions over the course of a week ending on 18 May 1998.³² The primary national security objective of Pakistan is to be viewed by the world's powers as an equal to India. Once India detonated nuclear devices, it was just a matter of time before Pakistan did the same. Pakistan detonated a nuclear explosive device on 28 May 1998 and a second device on 30 May 1998.³³

HISTORY OF U.S. RELATIONS IN SOUTH ASIA

Both India and Pakistan gained their independence from Britain in August of 1947. The U.S. quickly established diplomatic relations with both countries.

PAKISTAN

Shortly after Pakistan's independence, the U.S. began providing economic and military assistance to Pakistan. This strengthened relations between the two nations. The U.S. suspended military assistance to both India and Pakistan during their 1965 conflict. Even though the U.S. cut aid to both antagonists, U.S. relations with Pakistan were damaged because Pakistan concluded that the U.S. was not a reliable ally. Following the 1965 conflict, U.S. relations with Pakistan gradually improved and U.S. arms sales to Pakistan resumed in 1975. In 1979, the U.S. again cut off all assistance to Pakistan except food assistance. This action was in compliance with the Symington Amendment to the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 that was added to address concerns about Pakistan's nuclear program.³⁴

The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 highlighted common interests between the U.S. and Pakistan for peace and stability in South Asia. The U.S. resumed military and economic assistance "aimed at helping Pakistan deal with the heightened threat to security in the region"³⁵ and Pakistan's own economic development needs. Aid continued to flow to Pakistan during the Reagan administration. In 1990, the U.S. once again cut all aid to Pakistan when the Pressler Amendment took effect. Prior to 1990, Pakistan was the third largest recipient of military assistance from the U.S. behind Israel and Egypt.³⁶ The Pressler Amendment required, as a condition to receive U.S. assistance, that the President certify to Congress that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device.³⁷ Since neither President Bush nor President Clinton could make that certification, Pakistan received no U.S. assistance for several years. Various amendments have permitted the resumption of small-scale assistance to Pakistan in the 1990s,³⁸ but additional sanctions were imposed when Pakistan detonated nuclear devices in May 1998. Recently, the U.S. has been greatly concerned over Pakistan's support for the Taliban in Afghanistan (in whose territory Usama bin Laden finds shelter) and for militant groups who are escalating violence in Kashmir.³⁹ The Pakistani military's coup in October of 1999 has not helped U.S. – Pakistan relations. The U.S. is publicly urging a return to civilian rule, but has not ostracized the Musharraf regime, which has pledged to hold elections prior to October 2000.

INDIA

In sharp contrast with US – Pakistani relations, U.S. – Indian relations have been much more distant. During the Cold War, India chose the diplomatic path of nonalignment, which the U.S. often viewed as a pro-Soviet bias. Economically, India pursued socialist, protectionist policies that did little for India's own development or its links with the U.S.⁴⁰ Since 1965, the U.S. has had no significant military ties to India. The Indian – Soviet Friendship Pact of 1971 kept the U.S. from developing closer relations prior to the end of the Cold War. India and Russia decided not to update the pact following the collapse of the Soviet Union. This signaled an opportunity to the U.S. to improve its relations with the world's most populous democracy. In 1991, India undertook a gradual process of economic liberalization and reforms that began to open the Indian economy to global trade and investment. Today, the U.S. is India's largest trading partner (bilateral trade of \$10.9 billion in 1999) and largest investment partner with U.S. direct investment estimated at \$2 billion in 1999.⁴¹

CURRENT U.S. POLICY IN SOUTH ASIA

President Clinton visited India, Pakistan and Bangladesh in March 2000, the first U.S. President to visit the region since 1979. He and top administration officials have made numerous public statements regarding the importance of peace and stability in South Asia. These same public statements are nearly always paired with statements of concern over proliferation and not so subtle diplomatic pressure on India and Pakistan to give up nuclear devices. This strategy is specified in writing in the last two versions of the National Security Strategy signed by President Clinton in 1999 and 2000. The documents reveal that the United States views all nuclear proliferation as destabilizing and seeks to persuade India and Pakistan away from weaponizing⁴² or deploying nuclear weapons. Furthermore, U.S. policy aims to end Indian and Pakistani production of fissile material for nuclear weapons, to induce both states to fully adhere to international nonproliferation standards and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).⁴³

The U.S. joined with other nations in condemning the Indians for their May 1998 tests and applied strong diplomatic pressure on Pakistan not to test their own nuclear devices and supported UN Security Council Resolution 1172 (June 1998) that condemned both states for their nuclear explosions.⁴⁴ The U.S. failed to dissuade Pakistan from conducting their own nuclear tests, so the United States imposed sanctions on both India and Pakistan as mandated by the 1994 Nuclear Proliferation Prevention Act (often referred to as the Glenn amendment). Glenn amendment sanctions prohibited the export of sensitive technologies, military and foreign

assistance, official credits, or credit guarantees, lending by U.S. commercial banks, and withdrawal of U.S. support for World Bank and International Monetary Fund loans.⁴⁵ Sanctions toward both nations have subsequently been reduced in exchange for pledges not to transfer nuclear or missile technology to other nations. Sanctions on India have been weakened more than those on Pakistan since India pledged a "no first use" policy.

President Clinton initially postponed his March 2000 visit to the region as U.S. officials tried unsuccessfully to persuade India to sign the CTBT.⁴⁶ But of late, Washington has improved relations with India. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott met more than ten times with Deputy Chairman of the Planning Commission of the Government of India, Jaswant Singh, for a series of bilateral discussions from 1998 to 2000. Relations between the U.S. and India improved to their best level in more than three decades when Indian Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee, visited Washington in September 2000 and promised President Clinton that India would sign the CTBT.

The Clinton Administration began a program of Second Track Diplomacy between India and Pakistan that has helped ameliorate tensions between the two states. In addition, the Clinton Administration continued discussions with both governments aimed at common interests. After first distancing itself from the military government in Pakistan, the U.S. has recently had consultations with General Musharraf as part of this Second Track Diplomacy.⁴⁷

Certainly, the Second Track Diplomacy initiated by the Clinton Administration has helped reduce tensions between India and Pakistan. It resulted in the first high-level meeting between Indian and Pakistani leaders in years. Previously, both nations had agreed not to attack each other's nuclear facilities. In February 1999, Prime Minister Vajpayee of India and Prime Minister Sharif of Pakistan met in Lahore, Pakistan and agreed to an array of measures aimed at reducing the chance for nuclear miscalculations by either side. The two agreed to continue to "engage in bilateral consultations on security, disarmament and non-proliferation issues."⁴⁸ The October 1999 coup, and the Kargil incursion by Pakistan last year set back the progress made in Lahore.

STRATEGIC APPRAISAL

Having failed to deter the militarization of nuclear programs in India and Pakistan the United States needs to reexamine its strategy and policy toward the region. A strategy aimed at preventing proliferation may need rethinking once proliferation occurs. Public statements of Clinton administration officials suggest the U.S. is intent on roll back, but this policy appears to

have little hope of success. In fact, the only successful cases of roll back seem to have little relevance for South Asia.

The bedrock U.S. interest in South Asia is peace and stability. Against a backdrop of peace and stability, the U.S. can make progress on other issues such as nonproliferation, technology transfer, democracy/good governance, human rights, economic development, and trade liberalization.⁴⁹ Without a background of peace and stability, progress in other areas is appreciably more difficult. Methods to achieve regional stability include helping resolve long-standing conflicts, preventing or reversing nuclear proliferation, and assisting economic development.⁵⁰ Today's resources include public and private diplomacy, economic sanctions and foreign assistance, arms control agreements and enforcement agencies, and military power.

In addition to peace and stability, the National Security Strategy articulates nuclear nonproliferation as a primary U.S. interest and policy objective for South Asia.⁵¹ By including preventing or reversing (rollback) nuclear proliferation as a means of achieving regional stability and listing nuclear nonproliferation as a United States policy objective and interest, the U.S. is presupposing that Indian and Pakistan nuclear capability is ipso facto destabilizing.

Since regional stability is at least in part defined (in the National Security Strategy) by preventing nuclear proliferation, one can argue South Asian stability is faltering. Did India and Pakistan's nuclear tests of 1998 contribute to regional instability? In a March 2000 statement on the eve of his visit to both nations, President Clinton said, "The 1998 nuclear tests by India and Pakistan shook the world, intensifying global worries about the spread and potential use of nuclear weapons."⁵²

The December 1999 National Security Strategy states "Proliferation of advanced weapons and technologies threatens to provide rogue states, terrorists and international crime organizations with the means to inflict terrible damage on the United States, our allies and U.S. citizens and troops abroad."⁵³ For U.S. interests to be threatened by the proliferation of nuclear weapons by the governments of India and Pakistan, one would have to define one of the two countries a rogue state, terrorist or international crime organization. President Clinton's visit to both states in March 2000 suggests both states meet the minimally acceptable level of behavior and governance to avoid such labels.

Has the potential for use of nuclear weapons increased coincident with the acceleration of India and Pakistan's nuclear weapons programs to the point of testing? Undoubtedly, the potential for use increased not only by the addition of two new nuclear powers possessing weapons, but also by the uncertainty over the control of those weapons. It is vitally important to

United States' security concerns that the U.S. satisfy itself that both countries' nuclear weapons are under the strict control of government leaders who understand the grave consequences of their use.

Developments with respect to nuclear doctrine in both India and Pakistan have been mostly encouraging. India has publicly published a draft nuclear doctrine that shows nuclear devices under firm control of a national command authority. India has also pledged a "no first use policy." Pakistan is of greater concern due to its political instability and a nuclear doctrine that is less clear. Pakistan has not endorsed a no first use policy.

One could argue the U.S. push to roll back India and Pakistan's nuclear programs is heavy handed, and does not serve the stated U.S. objective of peace and stability for South Asia. It undermines the prestige that both nations so badly wanted, seems to ignore their security concerns, and causes resentment in Islamabad and New Delhi. Just as India and Pakistan resented U.S. pressure to remain non-nuclear weapon states, both nations resent the U.S. pressure to surrender and forswear their current nuclear capability. Furthermore, it is not clear that the presupposition on which this U.S. policy is based actually reflects reality on the ground.

The conflict between India and Pakistan is now more than half a century old. Pakistan's ability to defeat India, or even hold its own, in a conventional armed conflict is highly doubtful. Today, India holds Kashmir. It appears India does not covet Pakistani territory, and therefore India is unlikely to attack Pakistan. Given Pakistan's relative military disadvantage over India, Pakistan is unlikely to attack India. According to one intelligence analyst, "Therefore, while border skirmishes remain possible and even likely, all-out war makes little strategic sense for either side. With the public demonstration that nuclear weapons are a probable factor, the likelihood of an all-out war decreases rather than increases . . . To be precise, the presence of nuclear weapons does not abolish conventional conflict. However, it tends to decrease the willingness of combatants to challenge the very existence of a nuclear state, as that is the only rational circumstance under which the use of nuclear weapons makes sense."⁵⁴ "If the history of the nuclear era has taught us anything, it is that nuclear powers tend to become more, rather than less, circumspect in their use of warfare. Neither the Soviet Union nor the United States threatened the very existence of the other, therefore both sides refrained from using nuclear weapons."⁵⁵

FOUR U.S. POLICY OPTIONS

Four policy options are offered here for consideration. Two options (one and four) offer immediate strategic steps, i.e., actions the U.S. can take today and see results quickly. Either the strategy achieves U.S. aims or it does not. Options two and three offer more divergent policies with respect to nuclear weapons than the U.S. is pursuing today; both would likely take many years to develop and show results.

- The first option is maintenance of the current policy. Current efforts use diplomatic and economic instruments of national power seeking to reverse nuclear proliferation, and induce both states to renounce nuclear weapons and sign the NPT and CTBT as non-nuclear weapons states.

- The second option is for the U.S. to stand up to the challenge posed by the non-weapon states and abandon U.S. reliance on nuclear weapons. In fulfillment of this option the U.S. would close the Nevada test site, cancel all United States nuclear weapons programs including research, design, testing, deployment and invite all nuclear weapons states to begin immediate negotiations on an international treaty to eliminate nuclear weapons as required by the NPT.⁵⁶

- The third option is for the U.S. to work aggressively with the other four nuclear weapon states to develop a global strategy for the political and security conditions that would allow for the elimination of nuclear weapons and of all weapons of mass destruction.⁵⁷ This policy supports those who call for the elimination of all nuclear weapons by developing a strategy would specify the methods and means to achieve this goal. This option must include strategies for solving all regional conflict and a strategy aimed at getting all nuclear weapon states to abandon their reliance on nuclear weapons.

- The fourth option advocates recognition of India and Pakistan as nuclear weapons states, inducing them to sign the CTBT as nuclear weapon states and working to stabilize their nuclear arsenals.

Critics say the current policy is hypocritical; "U.S. addiction to nuclear weapons as a cornerstone of its military policy, coupled with its bankrupt efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation, is an utterly failed policy."⁵⁸ Continuing the present policy of sanctions and other pressure on India and Pakistan to give up nuclear weapons does nothing to increase U.S. influence in the region – in fact, it creates resentment – and is unlikely to yield success in de-nuclearization. There are too many legitimate security concerns faced by the South Asian nuclear powers to believe the United States or any broad coalition of nations could convince either India and Pakistan to forswear their nuclear arsenals in the near term. Although official

U.S. policy emphasizes rollback as a policy toward India and Pakistan, it is unrealistic to believe India would give up its nuclear power unless China also gives up its nuclear arsenal.

Option two would enhance regional and world stability only in the absence of conflict. Although this option answers the call of most nuclear have-nots, it presupposes a fairy-tale world where threats are benign. Given the current state of threats and conflict in the world, the U.S. cannot give up its nuclear weapons.

Option three fulfills the disarmament called for by Article VI of the NPT. However it presupposes the imposition of world stability⁵⁹ and resolution of all regional conflicts as a precondition and necessitates intensive monitoring of all declared and suspected nuclear states (as permitted by the NPT) to ensure against cheating during the disarmament process. This option permits the U.S. to stop ducking the global denuclearization movement by placing greater responsibility on other states (e.g., those involved in security disputes in the Balkans, Africa, the Middle East, etc.) to enhance international security.⁶⁰

Option four accounts for the powerful forces that drove India and Pakistan to go nuclear. It supposes nuclear weapons and deterrence can enhance regional stability so long as India and Pakistan learn to control their arsenals. It is predicated on the belief that the assumed lack of elaborate nuclear doctrine and command and control systems fuels global worries more than the weapons themselves. This option strongly enhances U.S. interests by shaping the international environment through stronger ties to both India and Pakistan, by heightening control over their arsenals and by using India's nuclear power as a natural counter balance to China's hegemonic designs. The U.S. has much to gain by a new accommodation with India. It is the world's most populous democratic country and an emerging power militarily and economically. More importantly, it is a natural irritant to China. As China continues to challenge U.S. interests in Asia, closer relations with India would enhance U.S. interests – "an enemy of my enemy is my friend." Proponents of this approach believe India and Pakistan's legitimate security concerns led to their nuclear weapon status and that South Asian proliferation is unlikely to prompt proliferation elsewhere. India and Pakistan do not upset global stability; they only threaten each other and China.⁶¹

Specifically, the U.S. could offer a new bargain for India and Pakistan. For their part of the bargain, India and Pakistan must agree to limit the number of nuclear weapons they build, develop (with U.S. assistance) better command-and-control systems to guard against accidental launch, and safeguard (under international inspection) nuclear and missile technology from leaking to other states. "The United States has an impressive body of technological and operational know-how, developed during the cold war, and could help both countries stabilize

their arsenals.”⁶² Additionally, the U.S. would share early warning devices and intelligence data to prevent accidental war, both by sharing satellite data and by bringing India and Pakistan into a larger arrangement to detect and warn against missile launches. This option diminishes the likelihood that nuclear weapons would be used by either state, and increases the likelihood that nuclear and missile technology would not be sold to other states. It helps stabilize Pakistan while also improving relations with India. Moreover, it enhances the role of the U.S. in both countries where an absence of U.S. initiatives might drive either or both countries to seek other allies.⁶³

CONCLUSION

Continuing distrust among India, China and Pakistan caused the leadership of India and Pakistan to conclude their nations' security could only be assured by possessing nuclear weapons despite negative world reaction and mandatory imposition of sanctions.

The primary U.S. interests in South Asia are protection of U.S. citizens followed by regional stability. The intensity of these interests is important rather than vital in that neither India, nor Pakistan's military or nuclear arsenals threaten the U.S. directly. The salient issue is whether the new nuclear arsenals enhance or degrade regional security. The U.S. can work to ensure the new nuclear technologies do not degrade regional security by providing U.S. nuclear technical (command-and-control and early warning) assistance to both countries.

Only India and Pakistan can truly determine if they are safer today than before they tested their weapons. Deterrence during the cold war kept a hot war from breaking out between the U.S. and Soviet Union for four decades. In the near term it is difficult to assess whether nuclear deterrence will enhance South Asian security. It is uncertain as to whether the costs of making sustained investments in both nuclear and conventional forces will drag economic development or whether, like the U.S. and Soviet Union during the Cold War, one country will bankrupt itself in an arms race.

Where some see threats based upon the nuclearization of South Asia, others see opportunities. South Asia is becoming much more important to the U.S. and the rest of the world in this century of global integration and interaction. Only through the passage of time will we learn whether the nuclear programs of India and Pakistan enhanced regional stability and U.S. interests or harmed them. India and Pakistan as nuclear weapon states are a fait accompli. The United States should adopt a realist view – no amount of outside pressure will cause South Asia to revert to a nuclear free zone – and revise strategy and policies to best further U.S.

interests now that the nuclear genie is out of the bottle. Stepping up and recognizing that one cannot put the nuclear genie back in the bottle is the first step.

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ENDNOTES

¹ U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, "The Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1994), 2.

² *Ibid.*, 7.

³ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁶ Jaswant Singh, "Against Nuclear Apartheid," *Foreign Affairs*, 77 (Sep/Oct 1998): 43 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell, UMI Publication no. 00157120.

⁷ Article V provides that any potential benefits of peaceful nuclear explosions be made available to non-nuclear weapon states that are party to the Treaty. (NPT, 14).

⁸ Article VI of the NPT requires "each of the parties to the Treaty undertakes to pursue negotiations in good faith on effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament, and on a general and complete disarmament under strict and effective control." (NPT, 14).

⁹ Munir A. Khan, "Problems of Nuclear Weapons Proliferation in South Asia" Paper presented at the International Conference on promoting Nuclear Disarmament Preventing Nuclear Weapons Proliferation (Castiglioncello, Italy: 1991), 12.

¹⁰ "2000 NPT Review Conference Achieves an 'Historic Consensus,' Fact Sheet Released by the Bureau of Nonproliferation U.S. Department of State, Washington, DC, July 1, 2000; available from http://www.state.gov/www/global/arms/bureau_np/000701_fs_nptrevcon.html; Internet; accessed 12 March 2001.

¹¹ John Pike, "The Proliferation Challenge: Regional Capabilities, Intentions, and Trends India and Pakistan," April 1996; available from http://www.fas.org/irp/threat/prolif96/south_asia.html; Internet; accessed 3 April 2001.

¹² William J. Clinton, *A National Security Strategy for a New Century* (Washington, D.C.: The White House, December, 1999), 44.

¹³ Neil Joeck, "Nuclear Relations in South Asia," May 2000; available from <http://www.ceip.org/files/publications/regimesouthasia.asp>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2001.

¹⁴ Stephen P. Cohen, "Perception, Influence, and Weapon Proliferation in South Asia: A Report Prepared for the Department of State, Bureau of Intelligence and Research" (Unpublished paper, University of Illinois, 1979), 23.

¹⁵ John W. Lewis and Xue Litai, *China Builds the Bomb* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988), 1-34.

¹⁶ Mohan Malik, "Nuclear Proliferation in Asia: The China Factor," *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 53 (April 1999): 31 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell, UMI Publication no. 10357718.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ See also, Nuclear Control Institute "Testimony of Paul Leventhal to Subcommittee on telecommunications, Trade and Consumer Protection Committee on Commerce. U.S. House of Representatives," 14 May 1998; available from <http://www.nci.org/t51498.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2001. Paul Leventhal provided evidence the Clinton administration was aware that since 1985 China was providing "nuclear assistance applicable to the manufacture of nuclear weapons" to Algeria, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan.

¹⁹ Lewis & Litai, 1-34.

²⁰ Malik.

²¹ David Albright, "India and Pakistan's Nuclear Arms Race: Out of the Closet But Not in the Street," *Arms Control Today* (Jun 1993): 12.

²² India considered the NPT discriminatory. First, it defined a nuclear weapon state as any state that exploded a nuclear weapon prior to 1966; forever making outlaws of any other state who pursues nuclear weapons due to security concerns. At the NPT renewal conference of 1995 "the nuclear weapon states showed no signs of moving decisively toward a world free of atomic danger." Instead, by unconditionally and indefinitely extending the NPT, the regime perpetuated the permanent monopoly of the five countries busily modernizing their arsenals. The 1996 Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty did little to help India's security. After more than 2000 nuclear tests among the five nuclear powers, the CTBT opened for signature. It was neither comprehensive nor aimed at disarmament, rather devoted to maintaining the nuclear status quo. For details, see Singh, 41 and Malik, 41.

²³ U.S. offers of security assistance expired years ago.

²⁴ Singh, 41.

²⁵ "No Nuclear Showdown Between India and Pakistan," 25 May 2000; available from <<http://www.stratfor.com/asia/commentary/0005250259.htm>>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2001.

²⁶ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of South Asian Affairs, "Background Notes: India," March 2000; available from http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/india_0003_bgn.html; Internet; accessed 27 February 2001. For a description of the Non-Aligned Movement's U.N. votes against the U.S. see Allan Gerson, "The Kirkpatrick Mission: Diplomacy Without Apology: America at the United Nations 1981-1985" (New York: The Free Press, 1991).

²⁷ Ibid., 45.

²⁸ Kahn, 8.

²⁹ Peter Lavoy, "South Asian Military Programs: Characteristics, Trends, Implications," 16 July 1998; available from <http://www.ceip.org/events/lavoy71698.asp>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2001.

³⁰ Rodney Jones and Mark McDonough, "Tracking Nuclear Proliferation, 1998: Pakistan," April 1998; available from <http://www.ceip.org/files/publications/trackingpakistan.asp>; Internet; accessed 8 March 2001.

³¹ Lavoy.

³² Joeck.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ U.S. Department of State, Bureau of South Asian Affairs, "Background Notes: Pakistan," March 2000; available from http://www.state.gov/www/background_notes/pakistan_0300_bgn.html; Internet; accessed 27 February 2001.

³⁵ Ibid., 17.

³⁶ Ibid., 10.

³⁷ Ibid., 18.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Thomas Pickering, "U.S. Policy in South Asia: The Road Ahead," 27 April 2000; available from http://www.state.gov/www/policy_remarks/2000/000427_pickering_sa.html; Internet; accessed 27 February 2001.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ "Background Notes: India."

⁴² For an excellent description of the actions required to weaponize nuclear devices, see Neil Joeck, "Nuclear Relations in South Asia," <http://www.ceip.org/files/publications/regimesouthasia.asp>.

⁴³ Clinton, 10.

⁴⁴ "Joint Statement on South Asia," Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents 13 July 1998, 34, no. 28 1311-1361; available from <frwais.access.gpo.gov>; WAIS document no. 9638732293.

⁴⁵ Tariq Rauf, "Learning to Live With The Bomb in South Asia: Accommodation Not Confrontation," 30 December 1998; <http://cns.miis.edu/pubs/reports/accom.htm> Internet; accessed 8 March 2001.

⁴⁶ Pamela Constable, "India Sees Improved Ties From Clinton Visit; Trip Likely to Soft-Pedal Nuclear Arms Discord," The Washington Post 22 February 2000, Sec A, p. 13 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell, UMI Publication no. 01908286.

⁴⁷ Pickering.

⁴⁸ Stratfor Special Report, "Text of Memorandum of Understanding signed by India and Pakistan February 21, 1999 in Lahore, Pakistan," 22 February 1999; available from <http://www.stratfor.com/asia/specialreports/special4.htm>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2001.

⁴⁹ Edward G. Lanpher, "South Asia: Back to Basics," National Defense University Strategic Forum 170, March 2000; available from <http://www.ndu.edu/inss/strforum/forum170.html>; Internet; accessed 15 March 2001.

⁵⁰ Clinton, 44.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² William J. Clinton, "Commentary; Perspective on South Asia; Regional Partnerships Are Key for 21st Century America; 'It is the Weakness of Great Nations, Not Their Strengths, That Threatens Our Vision For the Future,'" The Los Angeles Times 20 March 2000, Sec B, p. 5 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell, UMI Publication no. 04583035.

⁵³ Clinton, National Security Strategy, 2.

⁵⁴ Weekly Forecast: Global Intelligence Update, "Nuclear Buildup and Financial Meltdown: India, Pakistan and Russia," 1 June 1998; available from <http://www.stratfor.com/SERVICES/GIU/060198.asp>; Internet; accessed 12 March 2001.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Stanley K. Sheinbaum and Alice Slater, "Commentary; Abolish Nukes—It's Too Late for Control; Disarmament: As Long as Any State Has Nuclear Weapons, Nonproliferation is Doomed," The Los Angeles Times 7 July 1998, Sec. A, p. 7 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell, UMI Publication no. 04583035.

⁵⁷ George Perkovich, "Nuclear Proliferation." Foreign Policy, 112 (Fall 1998): 12 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell, UMI Publication no. 00157228.

⁵⁸ Sheinbaum and Alice Slater, 7.

⁵⁹ This option requires "resolution of regional disputes. Regional crises create the threats that animate the declared five's political and security interests in nuclear weapons. This

strategy also requires transparency in the nuclear programs of all states, particularly those with nuclear weapons capabilities and/or ambitions. Adopting these measures means that the Kashmir dispute and the Sino-Indian border conflict must be settled as part of a program to eliminate nuclear weapons, just as a genuine and durable peace must be established between Israel and the Arab states. Likewise, Persian Gulf insecurities must be resolved, particularly Iraq's ambitions . . ." (Perkovich, 20).

⁶⁰ Perkovich, 20.

⁶¹ Ibid, 12.

⁶² Fareed Zakaria, "Facing up to Nuclear Reality," Newsweek 8 June 1998, 28 [database on-line]; available from UMI ProQuest Direct, Bell & Howell, UMI Publication no. 00289604.

⁶³ Stephen P. Cohen, "India: Old Issues and New Opportunities, The Brookings Review 18, no. 4 (Fall 2000) 30-33; available from <http://www.brook.edu/press/review/fall2000/cohen.htm> Internet; accessed 15 March 2001.

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