

## **NUCLEAR RACE IN SOUTH ASIA AND ITS REGIONAL IMPLICATIONS.**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In south Asia India and Pakistan are two nuclear states. Both the countries are not only involve in the nuclear arms race in the region by pouring a lion share of their economies in the unending race but have also complicated the security situation in the region. Both the countries are old foes due to the bloody partition which still haunt the policies and minds of the policy makers since 1947 but also have the as old bleeding issue of Kashmir to this date. Beside this terrorism and other major and minor disputes are also responsible to track both the countries on arms race. In this paper I will try to analyses Indian regional and global military agenda its naval increasing presence in Indian Ocean Pakistan response and its implication over south Asia and Pakistan itself. Mostly secondary sources have been concerned in the writing of this paper.*

**Key Words:** Defense, Deterrence, India, Pakistan, Nuclear race, Strategic

### **INTRODUCTION**

Defense analysts suggest two Deterrence theories with two different scenarios. Firstly the opponents try to achieve the stable strategic equilibrium. This equilibrium achieves peace and stability, decreases the security dilemma and cools the use of nuclear weapons and most importantly increases the peace chances. Rationality in state strategic policies increases and decreases the asymmetric possibilities and eventually possibilities of going to war diminishes. The Second theory is opposite to the first one in which the instability increases, the nuclear threshold declines, increase in asymmetry which leads to the failure of the deterrence and finally to the war (Brodie 1946, Morgan 2003). These non-rational, less researched and wrongly assumed elements are present in today's south Asian scenario.

In south Asia two states possess nuclear weapons as well as involve in nuclear race which are Pakistan and India. Viewing Indian nuclear policy one can observe that it is accumulatively based on Nehruvian and Gandhian philosophies of Greater India (Abbasi 2015). Thus Indian nuclear weapons possession originates from a distinct history which is its historic rivalry with Pakistan and India and to maximize its military power in the region (Perkovich 1999) as well as to increase and play its role at international arena in security matters. Contrary to that Pakistan's nuclear possession has nothing to do with the Indian regional and international ambitions but it's purely to deter India and counter the balance and create a balance of terror against Indian threat of attack regarding its security.

This is due to the nuclear deterrence that both the countries haven't gone to war since then. Whereas deterrence seems fragile and peace and stability doesn't seem working when one sees sub conventional war with hidden hands via proxies and this due to two factors. Firstly due to the peculiar strategic orchestrations in the South Asian region, secondly the

rapidly expending Indian Defense budget. The reckless power projection of the Indian government (without considering and recognizing regional peace priorities) is subverting the South Asian strategic environment undermining the regional centric deterrence. The current defense budget of India is 51 billion\$ (2.5% of its GDP) (Kaushul 2016) on the other hand analysts also see a high up increase in the defense budget of India in the year 2020 (Mono 2016) about 70 billion\$ will be spent by the Indian government over its military budget in 2020 leaving Pakistan far behind.

### **The Nuclear Race in South Asia**

Currently India is swiftly upgrading and sophisticating it's all sort of weapons like non-conventional, conventional and network centric programs in order to dominate and indianize the Indian Ocean via nuclearizing it. In point of fact, one can see that India is rapidly transforming its navy in blue water strong and aggressive Navy via air craft carriers and introducing advanced Ballistic Missile Defense System (BMD) leading the region towards destabilization.

Pakistan on the other hand has enough deterrence credibility to counter Indian aggression by now. So Pakistan doesn't need to worry regarding Indian threat and BMD system as they are too complicated and are not advanced enough to outweigh Pakistan before India finds something more reliable and much advance which may not be possible for Pakistan to counter and this is quite possible in the long run. In spite of regional and international pressure, technological and financial hurdles, Pakistan has continuously been advancing its nuclear capabilities and forces in order to maintain the deterrence in the region and avoid war. Pakistan has also extended and advanced its cruise and Ballistic Missile system to a medium

range from a short range missile system like NASR 60 km range to Shaheen III which is 2,750 km hit range. That is due to nuclear deterrence of Pakistan which made it possible for it to reduce its defense cost from 5.3% to 3.2% of its GDP in the till 2010 (Monoo 2016). Nuclear arms are not only affordable for Pakistan but also a reliable source to counter Indian threat. The defense budget of Pakistan for the year 2016-17 was 860 billion Rs which is only 2.6% of the GDP. Pakistan allocation for defense budget as mentioned above is only 2.6% of its GDP is equal in share with the Indian defense budget but as we know India has an eight times larger economy than Pakistan. So Pakistan is not able to match India financially in nuclear expenditures as Pakistan is passing from a severe financial and economic crises however without stressing too much strain over its economy Pakistan must fortify its surveillance, accuracy of its missile system as well as by embarking on new naval ventures.

As *The New York Times* reported in 2015 that,

*“an unknown number of the tactical weapons were built, but not deployed” by Pakistan” (hoodbhoy 2016).*

The most alarming and tempting question in the minds of south Asian defense analysts is that what can be the most probable course of action for both the countries in the future and what top issues should be addressed? The bleeding and simmering issue of Kashmir between both countries is the most complex problem which can become main cause of aggression as border skirmishes persist and experience from time to time that may cross the condone and nerves of both states and may potentially lead to an ever destruction via full-fledged nuclear war. The second most important issue for both the countries after Kashmir issue is terrorism, extremism and militancy which redefined the threat lens at regional and international level especially after 9/11. But at the same time the basic characteristic of

the independence movement of Kashmir has been militant and Pakistan has always supported it so this makes the regional situation in this regard more complicated and tangled when both the countries go to diplomacy and try to solve it on table. The 2001 Indian parliament attack, 2008 Mumbai attacks (Jaspal 2014) or 2016 Ori attack all are by one way or another linked to the Kashmir issue. If both the countries want to address the issue it needs stalwart and resolute diplomatic endeavors as well as to hatch a joint security mechanism for the region as these acts of terrorism not only brought uncertainty regarding nuclear war in south Asia infect it deeply concerned the international community as well as today south Asian security is deeply linked with the international security

As both the countries are playing a “zero sum game” to undermine the interest of the other and promote its own interest under realist paradigms at regional and international coliseum or theater this will further put the region in grave danger and conventional and nuclear arms build out will only escalate the prospect to lead the regional situation to a no turn and undesirable clashing peaks. If truth be told the rapid, reckless and exorbitantly priced weapons are not securing the region infect it is highly destabilizing the region in the long run in all terms socially, politically and most predominantly economically.

It is the most demandable need to institutionalize peace in the region by going through all possible but pacific means to address conflicting issues. Though hard for Pakistan, it has to make difficult choices to maintain a comprehensive and a modest program without going to endless nuclear race with India. Pakistan must put all its efforts to tackle its economic difficulties importantly based on knowledge, social security, political stability, and technological and scientific progress through a resilient and peaceful democratic environment and culture and that is possible to

embark on research and knowledge promotion institutions with U.S and European countries as well as benefit from emerging china. In this regard youth must be the prime goal for both the nations to be promoted as it is the linchpin of any society to turn them in to a vigorous workforce. As far as the nuclear sphere is concern education centers are necessary to be established on nuclear use and escalation to create public awareness and comprehension on the nuclear issues (Jaspal 2015).

## **CONCLUSION:**

In order to promote peace and stability in the region both the countries have to engage in dialogue, trade and cooperation. Arm reduction regimes should be promoted and maximum restraint should be exercised. Peaceful diplomatic means should be involved for the settlement of Kashmir issue. Both the countries must keep in their policies that nuclear engagement in any case isn't going to bring victory to any party rather will bring complete annihilation for the entire region and its thousands of years old civilization. Both Indian and Pakistan must realize that the push back the nuclear war for a long time until revisit their all military propositions rationally, constraints on defense budgets and go through arms control and reduction policies and mechanisms for the greater good of the people of the whole region. Today we live in a global world so needs global and universal approach to resolve traditional issues throwing back the old traditional policies towards each other. International and regional institutions are required to strengthen in order to achieve the greater regional peace leading to the global peace and prosperity like SAARC. Today state in isolation can never achieve the dream of peace and prosperity rather it will only lad them towards difficulties and further

isolation so the best proposition for both India and Pakistan to bring peace, prosperity and development in this region only lies in cooperation.

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