

## **NON-PROLIFERATION – A HOAX**

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The Nation rejoiced as one when India's first ever nuclear device exploded at Pokaran, heralding her entry to the world Nuclear Club, For whatever may have been the considerations for the test, it did come at a time when the political and economic situation in the country was grim. At a time when everything appeared to be going wrong something went right and this natural boosted up the sagging morale of the Nation.

In fact, however, the test by itself signifies little. It is neither indicative of any shift in India's nuclear policy nor can it be termed as the climax in the development of nuclear technology in India over the years. The nature and the magnitude of the test could leave no doubt in any one's mind that it has been carried out for peaceful purposes which is quite in keeping with our often declared policy. The Indian views on peaceful nuclear explosions have been known to the world both from the proceedings of the Geneva Disarmament Committee as well as proceedings and debates in the United Nations since 1066. It is also common knowledge that the know-how for a nuclear explosion had been developed in our country as far back as 1964. What is surprising, therefore, is not that India has exploded a nuclear device, but that she has done it so late.

Whatever other things that this test may signify, it has certainly given practical shaped to our nuclear weapon capability. It has proved that India can make nuclear weapons when she decides to do so. It is this significance of our test that has invited such a tirade of bitter, and at times malicious, criticism from some countries. In our capability to develop nuclear weapons these countries see a threat to their concept of Non-proliferation. For us, however, this capability has enlivened the hitherto hypothetical debate on whether or not we should go nuclear the military way, by making it more meaningful.

The impression that any proliferation of nuclear weapons beyond the countries that possess them at present is dangerous for the security of mankind is perhaps deliberately being created by the Big Five, more for perpetuating their monopoly in the field than any serious concern for mankind. The prime consideration in determining whether we should or should not acquire nuclear weapons would have to be the consideration of our National Security rather than such biased world opinion. We would owe no apology to any one if we use the test for developing nuclear weapons. It is, therefore, for consideration whether there is any requirement for our being so vocal and categorical in enunciating our policy of using nuclear explosions for peaceful purposes only.

### **OUR PRESENT POLICY**

Development of nuclear weapons implies the development of a complete weapon system. This would naturally take time and what we may start developing today would be ours for use only probably after 15 years or more. Our decision on whether to go in for nuclear weapons or not should, therefore, be based on the world situation likely to prevail 15 to 20 years hence rather than what it obtains today. At present, the threat to our security comes from a nuclear power – China, because of her general policy of political dominance in Asia. This threat is likely to continue, not only for the next decade but for many years to come, because china is not likely to ever give up this policy and India would always remain an obstruction to the fulfilment of her

designs. This being the case one is led to wonder as to what could be the basis of our determination not to start developing nuclear weapons. It would be naïve to suggest that while outwardly maintaining an “Atom for Peace” posture India may be secretly going in for atomic weapons. It is impossible to develop such weapons, including their delivery systems secretly due to the numerous and peculiar – difficult to camouflage – tests that would be involved. In case such a convenient arrangement was possible then the other nuclear powers would have tried it too. Further more we have committed ourselves to the non-development of nuclear weapons far too categorically not to mean it. This committal may not be any hindrance to development of nuclear weapons at a future date but it would be too embarrassing for the Indian Government to start making nuclear weapons so soon after assuring the world that it would not do so. Our sincerity of purpose in this regard is also shown by the nature of the test that we have conducted.

What appears to have influenced our policy is the faith that we seem to have developed in the concept of Non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in spite of not being a signatory to the Treaty. This is apparent from the terrible guilt-conscience we have displayed by over-emphasising our policy of not developing nuclear weapons. This attitude is dangerous from national security point of view. Non-proliferation is a hoax which aims at preventing a nuclear war only at the cost of political subjugation of the “non-nuclear” by the “nuclear” and must never be allowed to influence our thinking and make us hesitate in developing nuclear weapons.

#### THE ANOMALIES

Fundamentally the concept of Non-proliferation is most anomalous. It is a brain child of those who do not believe in it, or rather do not believe in practicing themselves what they expect others to do. The exponents of the concept have not only built up between themselves stockpiles of nuclear weapons, enough to destroy the world, but are also relentlessly engaged in acquiring more and more; enough, perhaps, to destroy the world many times over. They are not opposed to the increase in the nuclear weapons as such, but are only against sharing them with others. In others acquiring them they see a threat to world peace because they believe that theirs are the only governments that are responsible enough to know the judicious use of these weapons and that others may set off a total nuclear war by their indiscriminate use. In order to dissuade others from joining their nuclear arms club numerous arguments against further proliferation like the chain reaction that this would set off, the Balance of Power that would get tilted, the adverse effect that it would have on the economy of the new entrants etc are being put forward. Generous offers of providing nuclear protection (without political strings of course) are being made by one member of the nuclear arms club to countries threatened by another. All this makes one suspicious of the sincerity of purpose of the exponents of the concept of Non-proliferation and feel that it is a fraud being played by the “nuclear” on the “non-nuclear” to perpetuate their monopoly of the weapons for political advantages that accrue there from.

#### **The Chain Reaction**

The chain reaction that is being sought to be prevented through Non-proliferation was, in fact, set off when the first country in the world decided to arm itself with nuclear weapons. So when the US made the ‘bomb’ it was but natural that the USSR should have done the same for maintaining world balance of power. With the USSR acquiring it the West European countries felt threatened and were compelled to buy American protection at the cost of being politically dominated by her. To shake themselves out of American dominance, and to rise above the second rate power status to which they had gone through, Britain and France had to acquire independent nuclear deterrents. In Asia, China felt strangled under the Russian Nuclear

Umbrella and she too decided to go nuclear, thus raising the membership of the nuclear club to five. At present, India vowed to the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, cannot be considered as the sixth member, but with a nuclear power China threateningly poised against her, it would not be any surprise if she goes nuclear too. If she does, then perhaps Pakistan and Iran might also want to go nuclear, but who could blame India for this chain reaction. India would go nuclear, if she ever does, as a victim of the chain reaction rather than as its initiator. If some body is sincerely interested in breaking this chain in the interest of world peace, then reason demands that it be cut at its source rather than in the middle as is being attempted by the advocates of Non-proliferation.

### **The Balance of Power**

The only way to ensure that a conventional war does not turn into a nuclear one would be through a Balance of Nuclear Power between potential enemies. The threat of mutual destruction, created by the retaliatory capability of each of the opponents at war, precludes the use of nuclear weapons by either. On the other hand, a nuclear imbalance and absence of retaliatory capability in one of the parties at war would tempt the other to use nuclear weapons and make short work of the war. How impatient and arrogant a country possessing nuclear weapons can become, when the other side at war does not, was demonstrated during World War II when, throwing morality to the winds, the Allies used the Atom bomb and caused the massacre of thousands of innocent people (including women and children) just for hastening up the Japanese surrender by a month or so. Many arguments were given by the Allies to justify the use of the Bomb against Japan and to prove that it was inescapable, but the fact remains that had Japan possessed even the slightest capability to retaliate, the Bomb would never have been used against her; no matter what great advantages the Allies could have derived by doing so. It is, therefore, most ironical that Non-proliferation should be advocated in the name of world peace.

Unfortunately, balancing of power is a tricky game and it may so happen that by restoring the balance through proliferation at one place, one may upset it at another. The exponents of Non-proliferation have the tendency to highlight the imbalance created by proliferation and use it as an argument against it, while totally ignoring the balance that it would establish. As a matter of fact, proliferation takes place more for restoring balance of power than disturbing it. This is evident from the proliferation that has taken place so far; but it is a vicious circle all the same. Whether a country is justified in going nuclear for establishing the balance with a country even at the cost of disturbing it with another could at best be judged from the type of balance that is being claimed to be restored and with whom. If two countries are militarily equal otherwise, or are potentially equal, establishment of a balance of nuclear power between them would, naturally, be justified. We are potentially equal to China and would, therefore, be fully justified in establishing a balance of nuclear power with her.

### **The Nuclear Umbrella**

As a substitute to proliferation that may be necessitated for maintaining the balance of power, Nuclear Umbrellas are being generously offered to the non-nuclear countries by the nuclear countries. Under these 'Umbrellas the security of a non-nuclear country is being sought to be ensured through a world balance of power rather than the regional balance of power to obviate the necessity for further proliferation of nuclear weapons. Apparently, this might appear to be an answer to the problem of proliferation, but in fact this idea is as ridiculous and unrealistic as Non-proliferation itself. In the first instance, it poses a big problem to the non-nuclear country in deciding as to whose Nuclear Umbrella to get under. There are at least three, if not five, powers offering this umbrella all of whom are at daggers-drawn with each other. By

accepting the nuclear umbrella of one, would not a non-nuclear country be unnecessarily getting involved in a cold war (if not hot) with the others. A country seeking nuclear protection would also be required to specify its enemy and, therefore, fall in line with the enemy's enemy. Having joined a power block thus, the non-nuclear country being the weaker partner would lose its identity, diplomatic manoeuvrability and political freedom, making any other security so achieved meaningless and not worthwhile. A country like India which, with its size, population and particular position on the globe, is destined to play an important and independent role in world politics, cannot be expected to accept such a position.

Even if a country were to accept the Nuclear Umbrella, there would be no guarantee of it receiving the necessary protection at the time of need. For, it would be most unrealistic to expect any country to involve itself in a self destructive duel for the sake of another. So while the protector country would have established its right to political and economic preferences in its protected country during peace, it is likely to back-out at the crucial time for fear of self destruction. The only help that a victim country may then expect would be sympathy, mercy missions, financial help for reconstruction, and a general denunciation of the aggressor – a poor consolation indeed. In any case, such help would be forthcoming even without having to accept the Nuclear Umbrella from any one. Even the aggressor would probably render such help, just as the Allies helped Japan.

### **Indiscriminate Use**

The fears that proliferation of nuclear weapons might result in their indiscriminate use by some country, thereby setting off a nuclear world war, are based on an assumption that the 'big five' who own nuclear weapons at present are the only responsible governments who could be trusted with the safe custody of these weapons. This may be what the 'big five' feel about themselves but they cannot expect others to believe the same. Others know too well that all the tension that exists in the world today has been created by the rivalries among the super powers and that if the nuclear weapons are unsafe anywhere it is in the hands of these powers.

Every government in the world would be sane enough to understand the implications of the use of nuclear weapons when the other has the capability of the second strike. Even a madman would not commit suicide. So the world has little to worry about proliferation as long as it aims at establishing a proper balance of power between potential enemies. Least of all need the world feel concerned at nuclear weapons proliferating to India. They would be safest here, as India is by far the most "trigger unhappy" country in the world. So "trigger unhappy", in fact, that on numerous occasions she has been guilty of neglecting national interests for the sake of world peace. She is, perhaps, the only country in the world that attempted a unilateral disarmament as one of the first actions after Independence; hoping to settle all disputes with her neighbours through "Panch Sheel". She has been most reluctant to develop militarily ever since and has had to be successively pushed by circumstances into becoming a military power of present standing. That the wars she has had to fight were not of her choosing is borne out by the fact that she has not tried to gain any political or territorial advantage even out of the three wars she has won against Pakistan. As a matter of fact India is still trying to appease Pakistan in an attempt to bring her round to see reason. Even in Bangladesh which was liberated at the cost of thousands of Indian lives, India made no attempt at gaining any more advantage than sending the refugees back to their homes. Nuclear weapons would, therefore, be safer in the hands of India than any of the countries holding them at present.

## THE NUCLEAR THREAT TO INDIA

Apart from the long outstanding border dispute between India and China, India is also China's natural rival in Asia. The Chinese nuclear power, therefore, poses a very real and live threat to our security. The nature of the threat so posed may be considered under the following heads: -

- (a) The threat of nuclear blackmail during the cold war.
- (b) The threat from her strategic weapons during war.
- (c) The threat from her tactical weapons during war.

### **Nuclear Blackmail**

Just as in the past political power grew out of the barrel of the gun, to day it grows out of the Atom Bomb. The political power so gained can be very effectively used for political blackmail of countries that do not possess the Bomb. The mere possession of nuclear power by China, when we do not have it, enables China to speak from a position of strength in her disputes with us. She would have no fear of the possibility of a war breaking out if negotiations fail which India certainly would. She would naturally use this strength for blackmail and for extracting undue advantages during the negotiation period. The only way for India to fight against this blackmail is by acquiring nuclear power. As this type of threat is more psychological than anything else, it would not require India to totally match the nuclear power of China. A mere display of a nuclear weapons capability, which would go a long way in putting India in a position of equality with China, would be sufficient to meet this to the *will* of the Nation to fight.

### **Threat from Strategic Weapons**

The destruction that could be wrought by a single strategic nuclear war-head over a civil populated area would be so dreadful that no country would risk one landing on its people, even if it possessed the capability of landing many more on its opponents. Chinese threat from such weapons can, therefore, at best be met by just developing a retaliatory capability. Here again, we would not be required to match weapon for weapon. A mere second strike capability after being able to stand up to the disarming first strike by China would constitute a deterrent credible enough to dissuade China from using these weapons against us.

### **Threat from Tactical Weapons**

While there may be some reason to believe that the Chinese would not use strategic nuclear weapons against us, even if we do not possess retaliatory capability, there can be no reason to believe that they would not, in a future war, use tactical nuclear weapons to win an easy victory over us. The terrain over which we would have to fight with China is ideally suited for use of tactical nuclear weapons. The area is under-developed and sparsely populated which affords opportunities for dealing with military targets in isolation and without giving cause for protest from the rest of the world.

As the tactical weapons have a limited destructive capability and would in any case be used only between the armed forces who could be trained to protect themselves against a nuclear attack, use of tactical nuclear weapons does not have the same implications as the use of strategic nuclear weapons has, and a mere retaliatory capability would not ensure security against their use. The only credible deterrent would be a proper balance of power between opponents; not only by matching weapon with weapon but also by matching defensive and offensive nuclear tactics. Only then victory would be assured to none and use of such weapons would appear fruitless. Our determination not to develop nuclear weapons would appear suicidal when viewed in light of this threat from China.

## **ECONOMIC ASPECT**

No study in Defence would be complete without considering its financial aspect. The general aim of this study should, however, be to find out how best our resources could be channelised to meet the defence needs rather than to cut the defence needs to suite our conveniences. There certainly a limit to what a country may spend on defence, but to ensure the effectiveness of defence, that limit is solely related to the existing threat and how it is intended to meet that threat. This line o thinking is all the more necessary while formulating our nuclear defence policy, because a nuclear weapons programme would cost much more than can be met from a normal defence budget, and the magnitude of effort that would be required to gear up the country's resources for meeting the defence needs would be so great that it is likely to shake our faith in our ability to stand the strain and may make us give up too soon. As a matter of fact, many in our country have already begun to feel that a nuclear weapons programme is beyond our reach and would not even want to start it. They feel that even our recent explosion involving an expenditure of Rupees 30 lakh has been conducted at the cost of food. They have, evidently, been taken in by the propaganda launched by some foreign countries to malign and ridicule our achievement in an attempt to dissuade us from going nuclear. The criticism of our expenditure on nuclear explosion is obviously not being made out of any genuine concern for our people. Otherwise, how come no accusing fingers have been pointed at us by these countries when at times we have been guilty of fiscal mismanagement and wasteful expenditure, the amounts involved wherein would have bought much more food that could have been bought with Rupees 30 lakh (or even Rupees 80 lakh as some western observers would want to believe), that we have spent on the nuclear explosion.

Of course, while the resources must be geared to meet the defence requirements, the defence burden must also be reduced to the minimum. Apart from the application of general principles of economy to all defence expenditure, it may be cut on consideration of alternatives (other than suicide and surrender) and substitutes. Even some risks may be taken but only as long as they are calculated and not just based on a "hope for the best" policy. The debate on "butter" verses the "guns" is age old, which goes on in every country and must not disturb us unduly. Even the US and the USSR have been charged with blowing up billions in developing nuclear weapons while many in their own countries live below or on the poverty line. The fact is that there is no limit to the amount of "butter" that is required in a country and that any expenditure on the "guns" would have to be at the cost of "butter". It, however, needs to be understood that guns are necessary to eat the "butter", whatever little the people may have, with safety and honour.