

THE FEAR OF NUCLEAR WEAPON: THE TRAUMA BROUGHT BY INDIA'S NUCLEAR TEST.

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India's primary objectives on nuclear test are to maintain sovereignty and national security. It also reason to deter the threat of use of nuclear weapons by other states against India. All states attempt at maximizing their relative power because only a strong states can guarantee more of their survival. India claimed that its nuclear weapon is a weapon of peace. Dr. A.P.J Kalam, the architect of Pokhran II declares, "Nuclear weapon is truly weapon of peace. If no nations dare to attack us, we truly achieve peace in one way".

However, nuclear weapons have brought many predicament and difficulties. It has been forwarded that the nuclear weapon has traumatized the people of India by bringing insecurity and often putting the country on the brink of nuclear war. The risk of nuclear war is higher in a situation where nuclear weapon states could attack other nuclear weapon states. We will look into four aspects of traumatization which the nuclear weapon has brought to India.

Fear of Financial Mess

The important traumatization brought by the Indian nuclear weapon is financial insecurity and anxiety. Financial concern is one of the important issues for any nation. Financial condition affected by the nuclear test, is a national disaster. Many Indian and foreign writers have calculated Indian financial loss due to nuclear weapons. They have emphasized that India faced a financial rout after the nuclear tests in 1998. The national economy was affected by the process of nuclearization. The United States (US) announced sanction against India under the Glenn Amendment, restricting loans from the US banks, etc¹. Many countries like Canada, Denmark, Japan and Sweden suspended millions of dollars of development aid to India². According to the

Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s estimate, the Rupee was de-valued by 20 percent. The nuclear test has affected industrial growth and agricultural growth rate too.

C Rammanohar Reddy has clearly mentioned that nuclear weapons development programme is an expensive affair. The 1998-99 Budget presented by the Government after the nuclear explosions, involves a 14 per cent increase in the defense budget over previous year's revised estimates collaborating to the monetary rising demands of nuclear weapons³. India's payment every year of Rs. 7 to Rs. 8 of every 100 rupees collected as tax would have to be use for creation of nuclear arsenal⁴. So, if India does not have Nuclear weapon, money use for nuclear weapon can be spent for other developmental schemes. The money could trickle down to the masses and education and health facilities could be uplifted.

Nuclear weapon is more of a concern of the state and not of the individual. After the explosions of nuclear weapon, India suffered diplomatic restraint in relation with other countries. In 1998, when India tested nuclear weapons, Australia and New Zealand pulled off their High Commissioners (Ambassador) from India as a protest to the nuclear test⁵. The world in general expressed their discomfiture. The United Nations (UN) was deeply disturbed by to the nuclear test. The UN Security Council (UNSC) unanimously condemned the nuclear conduct of India. Even the existing five (5) nuclear weapons states did not welcome India's tests. Major regional organizations including the Group of Eighth (G-8), European Union (EU), Organization of American States (OAS), Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), Organization of Islamic Countries (OIC), Nordic Council (NC), etc. expressed their deep embarrassment at India's nuclear tests. Diplomatic hardship has affected India's relation with many nations.

Fear of Nuclear Accident and Attack

Many India strategists have revealed the shortcoming of the India's nuclear safety. Nuclear weapons are sensitive and very vulnerable. Nuclear accidents may occur during the transportation or during storing of fissile materials even if it is assumed to be safe and secure⁶. Weapons safety has been much neglected in Indian situation. Raja Menon, a former India Navy official said that 'The Atomic Energy Acts' has 32 clauses; however, it has nothing to do with weapons. There is no legal provisions safety storage of nuclear weapons. In case of losing nuclear weapons, a person can be charged as simple as that of losing government property⁷.

Nuclear weapon can be a weigh-down for the military system too. India needs good maintenance of its nuclear weapons. This is not an easy task, and there are several operational burdens that accompany the handling and storage of nuclear weapons. Intelligence and information arena with regard to the safety of nuclear weapons cannot be sideline. India may have succeeded in building nuclear arsenal, but it must also realize that it is not easy to be a responsible nuclear weapons state. The trauma remains.

India appears to neglect the safety aspect of its respective nuclear weapons. India does not paid attention to the safety aspect of its nuclear devices. It does not have Permissive Action Links (PALs) devices which can limit unauthorized access to its nuclear weapons. PALs could also be unsafe, since anyone can access the code. In Indian nuclear weapon, there could be a possibility of unintended use. No system is completely foolproof and there is always a possibility that a determined military commander could find some short cut to defeat such system⁸. Former chief of Indian Navy, Vishnu Bhawat said India needs to well prepare to handle the weapons⁹. Nuclear weapons can bring about disaster for humankind¹⁰. Many people believe that the nuclear has brought insecurity to India.

Fear of Terrorism and Restlessness of the Region

Nuclearization has brought 'fear psychosis' to the South Asian region. Even if Abdul Kalam had declared that nuclear weapon bring peace, many scholars disagreed. Acts of terrorism had multiplied after the nuclear test. Paul Leventhal and Brahma Chellaney mentioned some of the important challenges and nuclear risks in South Asia. Some terrorists may aim for a strike at nuclear installation sites, and important governmental places to draw attention¹¹. The risk of a terrorists strike to nuclear installations is very high.

The internationalization of domestic terrorism is also a great challenge where some terrorist groups took assistance from other terrorists' organizations from other countries. After the World Trade Centre terrorist attack in 2001, the Al-Qaeda network, and its linkage with organizations spreading across the globe became a pertinent international security concern. South Asia is also quite prone to terrorist attack.

India's weaponization process encouraged and accelerated Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons¹². There is clear evidence that Pakistan acquired nuclear reactor material from the US in 1965. Pakistani leaders were also keen to develop nuclear weapons where Z.A Bhutto even said

that Pakistan will invest its resources to make the bomb even if that entails eating grass. Pakistan feared India's strength and always tries to keep up with its neighbor India, even on the nuclear arena. In fact, Pakistan object is to have enough weapons to challenge to India's capability. After the nuclearization of India and Pakistan, the strategic environment in South Asia underwent a dramatic change. The present situation in South Asia is best described as a, 'stability and instability paradox over the nuclear issue'. There is a very high risk of a nuclear war in South Asia.

Peace will not be easy in South Asian because of nuclear weapon as it brought more trouble in South Asian region. Moreover, both countries failed to transform their dialogue into an explicit strategic dialogue due to lack of a common strategic language¹³. Peace is difficult to attain before nuclear comes and it would be difficult to get peace after accumulating disastrous weapon between India and Pakistan. Thus, there is a continuum of fragile peace.

Suppression of Anti-Nuclear Movement

Many writers have advocated the danger of nuclear weapon. They have portrayed many influential strategist has dominated the Indian nuclear debate. In the book, *South Asia on a short Fuse: Nuclear Politics and Future of Global Disarmament*, Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik wrote contentious terrain of debates over nuclear disarmament. They said that it has not permitted free and full expression of popular sentiments. The nuclear elites, experts and strategies are not really accountable to public and tried to dominate discussion on feasibility and desirability of nuclear disarmament¹⁴. Jayita Sarkar has exposed the true nature of an anti-nuclear movement in India, he said that "[it] would remain largely a marginal movement with sporadic spurts depending on the issue at hand, the site in question and the political parties involved"¹⁵.

Karsten Frey, in his unpublished dissertation, said that the elites have played a crucial role on Indian nuclear weapon programme and nuclear policy making. He said that, "Beyond this direct influence of the strategists on the government's decision-making, their most effective instrument of power marks their 'communicative power', i.e. their supremacy over public opinion – mainly exercised through intensive publishing in India's dailies"¹⁶. Arundhati Gosh, one of the able Indian negotiators of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT), believes that signing the CTBT is no more than surrender to the westerns nations. The domestic CTBT debates could create a problem and influenced the government to defer to comply with the treaty too. Karsten Frey has called the 1996 Domestic CTBT Debate as 'Dialogue of the Deaf'.

In the nationwide India's disarmament debate, the strategic experts or elites play a very huge role. As Perkovich reveals in his book, "*India's Nuclear Bomb: The Impact on Global Proliferation*", the scientific elite also put pressure on the nuclear test. The small groups of defence scientist with disproportionate power and influences which, Ollapally called, 'the strategic enclave' push for nuclear test¹⁷. This domination of the Indian strategic debate by the small group has suppressed the anti-nuclear movement in India. Amulya Reddy has accused India science has betrayed the humanistic heritage of Gandhi and Buddha by building the nuclear weapon¹⁸.

Criticism of the Narration:

In India, the voice of anti-nuclear is audible. Many writers have been raising their voice against nuclear weapon; they have been sensitizing fear of nuclear weapon and have clearly portrayed how this fear has been spreading to the masses, bringing about traumatization to the people of India through fear of financial mess, fear of nuclear accident and nuclear attack, fear of terrorism. It has been emphasized how nuclear could bring burden to India's security and affects the general public. It has been said that the movement against nuclear in India was restricted by the autocratic government officials; however, it seems that the anti-nuclear movement in India is not representing the masses. The anti nuclear movement in India is very contestable that the voice raised by the anti-nuclear movement has not related with the voice of general public. It rather is the voice of few elite peoples. Those people are influential, educated, highly intellectual people who have a very good relation with the media; they have intelligently using the media to move up the issue of nuclear weapon.

Anti-nuclear supporters have repeatedly put in the picture that nuclear weapon could be a burden for India. However, the repetition of calling nuclear disarmament and raising its voice against nuclear weapons has inculcated fear to the people that has traumatised the people of India. No doubt, nuclear could be a burden; it has traumatised the people, however, those influential writers seem to have amplified their fear and have alerted the people through their writings. After the first nuclear bomb (we could say Atom Bomb) drop in Japan, no other nuclear bomb has been dropped so far. However, due to narrativizing the fear of nuclear weapon and sensitizing the nuclear weapon, the fear of nuclear bombing still remains.

Conclusion:

India is a *de facto* nuclear weapon state. On its way to attain security, reputation and protecting sovereignty, India decided to go for nuclear. However, those burden needs to be carried if it want

some benefits and might recover from the problem faces by the nuclear weapon test. On the other hand, India's nuclearization too has brought many predicament and problems. It has brought insecurity and fear of nuclear war, the nuclear weapon has irritated other nuclear weapon states. India faces a problem in financial, diplomatic protocol due to nuclear test. To add to the trauma, the weapon itself is vulnerable. Strategic experts question the safety of the weapons. Nuclearization has injected a vociferous urge for other nations to possess it too, making South Asia very insecure. So, it is undeniable that the presence of nuclear weapons has brought unimaginable trauma to the world.

End Notes:

¹ Hillary Synnott, "The causes and consequences of South Asia's nuclear tests" Volume 332 of Adelphi papers (OUP 2001) p, 28-29.

² http://www.armscontrol.org/act/1998_05/hd1my98

³ See details on the <http://www.angelfire.com/mi/MIND123/BUDGET.html>

⁴ C. Ramonahar Reddy, "Nuclear weapon & School for children an estimate of the cost of Indian Nuclear Weapon Program" in C Ramonahar Reddy et.al (eds) *Prisoner of the Nuclear Dream*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman 2003),p. 393-400.

⁵ See details on the http://www.armscontrol.org/act/1998_05/hd1my98

⁶ G. Balachandra, "Nuclear Safety" in PR Chari et.al (eds) *Nuclear Stability in Southern Asian*, New Delhi: Manohar 2003),p.83-97.

⁷ Raja Menon, "The Post Prokran II Challenges" in M.L Sodhi (ed.) *Nuclear Weapon and India's Nuclear security*. New Delhi: Har Anand Publication 2000),p, 116

⁸ Rajesh Rajagopalan. *Second Strike :Arguments about Nuclear War in South Asia*, (New Delhi: Penguin Vikings 2005),

⁹ Bhagwat, Admiral Vishnu , "The Question of Credibility" in M.L Sondhi (ed.) *Nuclear Weapon and India's Nuclear Security*, (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication 2000)

¹⁰ Begi Hersutanto, "Humankind Is Not Yet Safe" CSIS Working Paper Series WPI 064, December 2005: http://www.csis.or.id/working_paper_file/64/wpi064.pdf (Accessed on 22.11. 2009)

¹¹ Paul Leventhal and Brahma Chellaney, *Nuclear Terrorism Threat, Perception and Response in South Asia*, Institute for Defense Studies and Analyses, New Delhi October 10, 1988, <http://www.nci.org/p/pl-bc.htm> - 96k (Accessed on 11.2.2008)

¹² Kanti Bajpai, "Strategic Threats and Nuclear Weapons : India China and Pakistan" in C Ramonahar Reddy et.al (eds.) *Prisoner of the nuclear Dream*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman 2003) p, 51.

¹³ Tariq Rauf, "Confidence Building and Security Building measure in the Nuclear area with relevance for South Asia" *Contemporary South Asia*, Vol 14, No 2, June(2005).

¹⁴ Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik, *South Asia on A Short Fuse: Nuclear Politics and Future of Global Disarmament*, (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁵ Jayita Sarkar, “An Indian Anti-Nuclear Movement?” [online: web]http://www.idsa.in/idsacomments/AnIndianAntiNuclearMovement_jsarkar_280711. 2011.

¹⁶ “Frey, Karsten), *Elite Perception and Biased Strategic Policy Making: The Case of India’s Nuclear Build up*, PhD thesis, (Heidelberg: University of Heidelberg 2004) .

¹⁷ Ollapaly, Deepa, “Domestic politics and India’s 1998 nuclear tests”, in Amitabh Matoo and Happyman Jacob (eds.) *Shaping India’s Foreign Policy People, Politics and Places*, (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publications 2010).

¹⁸ Amyulya K Reddy, “Designing Nuclear Weapons: The Moral Question” in C Ramonahar Reddy et.al (eds) *Prisoner of the nuclear Dream*, (New Delhi: Orient Longman 2003),p 203.

