

Ballistic Missile Defence, China And South Asia

The terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001 led the US to the formation of “a coalition against terrorism” and a strong desire to become militarily invincible by persisting with the concept of ballistic missile defence (BMD). This decision was taken by neo-conservatives in the Bush administration. However, it ignited a lot of domestic and international debate.

Internationally, there were voices of dissent raised from Europe, Russia and others. It was China that felt particularly concerned as it thought that the BMD was meant towards its containment. It perceived the BMD as diversion of its resources to missile and arms development and a hindrance in the way of its modernisation programme. Moreover, it felt that if it responded to the BMD, the ripple effect will travel to India and then onto Pakistan – leading to an inexorable arms race in South Asia and East Asia.

Dr. Maqbool Bhatti’s study analyses in detail the impact of BMD on China and South Asia. First, it traces the Bush initiative and antecedents of the BMD programme; secondly, it describes the international reactions in Europe, Russia and Japan; thirdly, China’s reactions and concerns are highlighted; fourthly, its impact on the ongoing South Asia’s nuclear and missile programme is dealt with; fifthly, the North Korean nuclear programme is briefly described, and; lastly, the impact of 9/11 and the prospects for future are sketched.

There is little gainsaying that by embarking on the ambitious BMD plan, the US intends to establish global hegemony. This will be based on its unchallengeable technical and military superiority and prevention of the emergence of any countervailing rival. This goes in tandem with its policies of unilateralism and pre-emption, which led to the Iraq war of April 2003. The author has appropriately highlighted the dangerous aspects of pre-emption when he stated that ‘the doctrine of pre-emption not only violates the UN Charter and international law, it also tends to encourage other hegemonic powers.’ However, some counter-currents to this global hegemony are seen in many countries of the world. If and how these trends mutate into realities remains to be seen in the years ahead.

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INTRODUCTION

Concerns over disarmament and non-proliferation have been prominent in the political agenda of the major powers since the 1960s, when nuclear and missile technology spread to developing countries in the Third World. The UN began to focus increasingly on controlling the spread of weapons of mass destruction and preventing the spread of conflicts to outer space. The opening of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1968 for signature in Geneva was seen as a landmark in fulfilling the non-proliferation agenda. The second major milestone in this regard was the opening of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) for signature on 24 September 1996 in New York. The third key measure designed to save mankind from the threat of nuclear conflict was expected to be the Fissile Material Control Treaty (FMCT), on which consultations were supposed to begin at the start of the twenty-first century.

As the world's leading military and economic power, the US had been in the forefront of efforts to promote nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, proactively persuading other countries to adhere to these agreements. Indeed, with the end of the Cold War, prominent analysts and academics in the USA listed "preventing nuclear chemical and missile proliferation" as priority areas for US foreign policy.[1] Even as US diplomacy pursued these goals, a sentiment developed among conservative and business circles in the country that progress in arms limitation and disarmament goals would have the effect of weakening the military-industrial complex in the United States. Consequently, two new lines of approach to the security issues confronting the US and the Western world emerged.

Writing in the prestigious US journal, *Foreign Affairs*, in 1993, Samuel P. Huntington, a professor at Harvard, expressed the view that world politics was entering a new stage, in which the source of conflict would no longer be ideological or political, but instead be based on a "clash of civilizations". Defining civilization as the broadest kind of cultural identity, he identified seven or eight major civilizations, including the Western, Confucian, Japanese, Islamic, Hindu, Slavic-Orthodox, Latin American and, possibly, African. The most important and bloody conflicts were likely to occur along the fault lines between the various cultures. He arrived at the conclusion that, given current trends, the most likely conflict would be between "the West and the rest", with the main challenge to the West coming from Confucian and Islamic states.[2]

Though Huntington's thesis was extensively refuted, it did serve the purpose of persuading the West, and the US in particular, to maintain a technical and military edge over the "rest" in the years that followed. This stimulated a virtual global arms race, signifying a halt to the reduction in defence expenditures that had followed the end of the Cold War.

The second line of reasoning adopted by the US was that it could not afford to be complacent about its dominant position in the nuclear and missile fields. Given the spread of technology and what it called the threat from "rogue states" (such as North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Libya), further testing and increased sophistication of its nuclear arsenal were considered

necessary. This led the Republicans in the US Senate to prevent the ratification of CTBT in 2000, despite President Clinton's best efforts. The Republicans, who had been pushing the concept of anti-missile defence even during Clinton's incumbency, adopted it as a key plank of the country's defence strategy-without advance consultations with US allies-after President George W. Bush assumed office in January 2001.

The terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001 had a dual effect on US strategy: they seemingly compelled the abandonment of the unilateralist approach adopted by the Bush administration, which now felt obliged to set up a global "Coalition against Terrorism". At the same time, the US leadership felt an even greater urge to make the country militarily unchallengeable by persisting with the concept of ballistic missile defence (BMD).

Apart from generating political debate within the US, the move has aroused widespread international opposition. The Europeans are skeptical about the need for the initiative, specially as it was predicated on a denunciation of the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty of 1972, one of the major arms control measures of the Cold War years, the continued relevance of which to the post-Cold-War security architecture in Europe most of them remained convinced. Russia also is greatly concerned over the unilateral nature of the US initiative in withdrawing from the ABM Treaty.

It is perhaps China that feels most seriously threatened, as it perceives BMD as part of the containment moves of the Bush administration. China maintains a minimal force of long-range missiles and if the US acquires the capacity to interdict missiles, Beijing may have to re-allocate resources earmarked for its economic modernization towards creating a credible defence by increasing its missile forces and developing a missile defence system of its own. Any such increase in China's missile forces would provide a justification for India to augment both its nuclear and missile forces, as India continues to regard China as the primary threat to its security. This in turn will be considered by Pakistan as justification to expand its own nuclear and missile forces; and thus an arms race would engulf South Asia as well.

It is in this context that reputable arms control experts, analysts and think-tanks, some of them from the US, have voiced reservations about the concept of BMD. A new arms race in the world is bound to raise new tensions, compel a diversion of resources to military acquisitions and pose a threat to the growing international commerce, based on satellite communications.

The concept of BMD, though associated primarily with the US, has also emerged in the South Asian context. India's nuclear doctrine envisages nuclear forces based on a triad of aircraft, mobile land-based missiles and sea-based assets to achieve "credible minimum deterrence".[3] The survivability of these forces will be ensured through a variety of measures, among which an ABM system is being developed on a priority basis. India has already entered into arrangements to acquire sophisticated technologies from Russia and Israel. India's missile defence system is predicated on perceived threats from China and Pakistan.

One significant result of the reliance on BMD systems by the US and India was that New Delhi rushed to endorse the US concept of missile defence as soon as it was announced by President Bush. The Bharatiya Janata Party- (BJP) led government is keen to develop strategic linkages with Washington, which it considers vital for the attainment of its twin objectives of great power status and regional hegemony in the Indian Ocean region.

This study covers the US concept of BMD and its implications for China on the one hand, and for South Asia (i.e., India and Pakistan) on the other. North Korea's nuclear programme also figures prominently, not only because of the interest it holds for the US, China and other East

Asian countries, but also on account of an alleged linkage with Pakistan.

The paper is divided as follows:

- The Bush initiative, antecedents and implementation problems.
- International reactions in Europe, Russia, and Japan.
- China's reactions and concerns: an analysis of Chinese nuclear policies and deterrence strategy.
- The South Asian context of missile defence: evolution of nuclear and missile programmes in India and Pakistan and their relationship with Chinese plans and concerns.
- North Korea's nuclear programme.
- Impact of the events of 11 September 2001.
- Challenges for the international community in the management of BMD in the global and regional contexts.
- Conclusion: prospects for the future.
- Epilogue: post-Iraq scenario.

BMD: INITIATIVE, ANTECEDENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION PROBLEMS

Utilizing the forum of the National Defence University in Washington on 1 May 2001, President Bush announced a revised strategy for keeping the peace in the contemporary world, where "rogue nations" were the major source of threats and "terror and blackmail are a way of life". Emphasizing the fact that Cold-War deterrence was no longer enough, the President said that, to maintain peace and protect US citizens as well as its allies and friends, "We need a new framework that allows us to build missile defence to counter the different threats of today's world. To do so, we must move beyond the constraints of the 30-year old ABM Treaty." [4]

In calling for moving beyond the concepts of the ABM Treaty, which only "enshrines the past" and "prohibits us from pursuing promising technology to defend ourselves, our friends and allies", President Bush offered a new framework that would encourage "still further cuts in nuclear weapons". He affirmed his commitment to achieving "credible deterrence with the lowest possible number of nuclear weapons, consistent with our national security needs, including our obligations to our allies." He announced that he would dispatch "high-level representatives" to allied capitals in Europe, Asia, Australia and Canada to "discuss our common responsibility to create a new framework for security and stability that reflects the world of today." [5]

While announcing the dispatch of the delegations, President Bush described their mission as "real consultations", stressing that America's allies were not being presented with unilateral decisions already made: the US would take their views into account. He stated that he would reach out to other interested states, including China and Russia, and expressed the hope that Russia and the United States would work together to develop a new foundation for world peace in the twenty-first century.

The US President's initiative, announced unilaterally, reflected the desire of the sole superpower to achieve total security and, in the process, bring large-scale benefits to its military-industrial complex. The terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001 highlighted vastly more complex threats, hardly susceptible to control through BMD.

i. Though the exact source and organization of the terrorist attacks have never been pinpointed, the identification of the nineteen hijackers as Muslim Arabs clearly reflected the outrage and despair felt by the Arab and Islamic world over the pro-Israel policies of the US. The state of Israel had been created at the initiative of Britain in 1948, with the approval and support of the US which extended total military and diplomatic support to the Jewish state. The complete disregard demonstrated for the consequences for the Palestinian Arabs created the frustration and anger behind the terrorist attacks. Similar frustration and despair can arise in other parts of the world, over political grievances requiring political solutions.

ii. As the international economic order has produced a constant widening of the gap between the rich and the poor, the scale of agitation over economic deprivation has also mounted. It is not only possible but probable that if poverty and destitution continue to affect large populations in the developing countries, many of these countries may also resort to terror.

To begin with, the US-declared war against terrorism was pursued mostly against terrorist groups and concentrated on Afghanistan, where the Al Qaeda organization enjoyed the backing of the Islamic fundamentalist Taliban regime. The operations have spilled into the tribal areas of Pakistan, where terrorist remnants appear to be seeking refuge. However, while security and intelligence operations are necessary, a widely-held view is that the root causes of terrorism-which lie in the political and economic challenges outlined above-must be addressed.

The US and its allies have responded in the economic sphere by increasing aid to certain countries, in an effort to address economic discontent. However, the US persistence with BMD plans is reminiscent of the "star wars" plans of another Republican President, Ronald Reagan, in the 1980s, providing its historical perspective.

Strategic Defence Initiative or "Star Wars"

Plans for a "Strategic Defence Initiative" (SDI) were announced rather dramatically by President Reagan on 23 March 1983. The plan was to cover a variety of projects in several technical fields and the Strategic Defence Initiative Office (SDIO) was created in the Department of Defence. President Reagan did not obtain the approval of the Joint Chiefs of Staff but sought public support for the project which, he hoped, would render nuclear weapons impotent and obsolete, and transform the policy of Mutually Assured Destruction (MAD) into "assured survival". [6]

The purposes of the SDI were as follows:

- i. To seize the high ground of space before the Soviet Union did so;
- ii. To create what the Department of Defense visualizes as "layered defence", through a combination of ground-based and space-based weapons;
- iii. To achieve the capability of destroying Soviet missiles in the boost phase.

The programme, which came to be known as "Star Wars" after a popular Hollywood film,

aroused widespread criticism on legal, technical, political and economic grounds. The negotiators of the 1972 ABM Treaty with the Soviet Union contended that SDI was in violation of that treaty. The NATO allies of the US complained that SDI would force the Soviet Union to augment its offensive capacity. A popular argument against the project was that it would expand the arms race into space.

Reagan's re-election in 1984 weakened the opposition to SDI and the programme was pursued with an annual allocation of \$4 billion for various projects under it. As the negotiations with the Soviet Union for arms reduction progressed, following the accession of Mikhail Gorbachev to power, the strategic compulsion behind SDI receded. Technical problems were encountered in perfecting various devices and the growth in the size of the national debt brought financial pressures. As a result, the budgetary allocation for SDI- related programmes came down to \$3 billion from 1990 onwards.

The range of technical sophistication involved in a missile defence system is indeed formidable. A BMD system will have to include not only interceptors but also a panoply of detection, tracking and communications systems, involving huge expenditure. At present, it is possible to make only very imprecise estimates of the costs; these range from \$200 billion to \$1 trillion.[7]

The outbreak of the Gulf War in 1991 and Iraq's use of Scud missiles had the temporary effect of reinforcing interest in ABM systems. However, missile defence remained very much a Republican-backed programme and, during the presidential election campaign of 1992, the Democrats voiced opposition to it. Following the election of Bill Clinton as President, his administration declared, in May 1993, that the "Star Wars" era had ended.

Revival of BMD under Clinton

Having cut the funding for BMD dramatically and having reiterated US adherence to the ABM Treaty, Clinton came under pressure to change his policies when the Republicans gained control of Congress after 1995. The Clinton administration had to respond to this pressure by shifting from a technology-readiness orientation to a deployment-readiness programme. North Korea's testing of a Taepo Dong I Missile on 31 August 1998 gave a boost to proponents of the NMD programme and Clinton finally signed the National Missile Defence Act of 1999, calling for the deployment of a system of national missile defence "as soon as is technologically possible". However, the Clinton administration basically supported a limited land-based NMD system, consisting of 100 interceptor missiles placed in Alaska: this would have been within the framework of the ABM Treaty. Clinton made it clear in December 1999 that his administration would consider threat technology, arms control and cost factors before deciding whether to deploy an NMD system.[8]

The technology factor went poorly, as NMD tests in January and July 2000 ended in failures. The domestic opposition to NMD grew within the US and, internationally, opposition to it was voiced by Russia, China and some European countries. President Clinton therefore deferred the deployment decision to his successor.

Implementation Constraints

An effective BMD system is likely to involve huge investment in technological innovation as well as of financial resources. An incoming missile can be attacked at three stages of its flight: the boost phase, after launching; the cruising stage, as it proceeds to its target; and the terminal stage, when the warhead is released. Interdicting a missile at boost phase would be ideal, but that is possible only if advance information is available about an intended attack, which is well nigh

impossible. According to General Ronald Kadish, Director of the US Ballistic Missile Defense Organization, "The missile defence currently under development would be able to deal with incoming missiles only in their terminal stages." [9]

BMD Policy under Bush

Even before his election, Bush had emphasized his commitment to the policy of developing and deploying BMD to counter missile attacks and blackmail. The Republican right wing and conservative think-tanks were strongly critical of Clinton's BMD policy, which, they maintained, would leave the US vulnerable to missile attacks. They also considered the ABM Treaty a Cold-War anachronism. When Bush entered the White House, he appointed a conservative national security team, and Defence Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, declared that BMD was a priority goal of the administration, a view backed by Secretary of State, Colin Powell.

After the announcement on 1 May 2001 of the initiative for BMD, Rumsfeld announced the framework of a many-layered BMD system. The budget initially envisaged was in excess of \$100 billion. The BMD organization was strengthened and it was announced that the testing programme would be speeded up to enable the deployment of a BMD system before 2008.

Problems Arising from BMD

Since the end of the Cold War, the US, as the sole superpower, has been inclined to tailor its arms control policies to national concerns and goals. These policies have been influenced by two opposing tendencies: Democratic administrations have been sympathetic to negotiated arms control but Republicans tend to be strongly antipathetic. Since a two-third majority is required for any bill to be adopted by the Senate, ratification of accords backed by the administration can be blocked by a hostile Senate. The US was, for instance, deeply involved in the negotiation of the CTBT, which it signed in 1996, but was unable to get it ratified.

The Republicans, having gained control of Congress in 1995, were able to exercise constraints on Clinton's multilateral initiatives; with the election of Bush, they assumed a dominating role. The Bush administration's policies on security and arms control reflected a new feeling of vulnerability as ballistic missiles were acquired by players in regions lacking stability and which the Bush administration believes are acquiring weapons of mass destruction (WMD). The weakening of central control in Russia also led to an increased threat of proliferation of WMD. As Clinton had deferred decisions on NMD to the successor administration, Bush felt it incumbent upon his administration to take decisions. These involved rapid progress towards acquiring an ABM system as well as towards withdrawal from the ABM treaty. [10]

Apart from the debate on whether US security should be based on interdependence or unilateralism, a serious consequence of BMD will be the weaponization of space. According to a July 2001 speech of the executive director of the BMDO, space-based kinetic-kill weapons now under development will be tested in space in 2005 or 2006, to be followed by tests of space-based lasers. [11] As the former US Ambassador for US-USSR arms control talks, Jonathan Dean, stated at the Beijing seminar in October 2001 on "Challenges Facing International Arms Control", testing and deployment of space-based weapons would be a decisive step towards the weaponization of space. [12] This, in his view, would be in violation of the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, based on ensuring the use of space for peaceful purposes. He recalled that repeated resolutions opposing the weaponization of space had been unanimously agreed.

At the Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva, China responded to indications of US moves towards the weaponization of space by putting forward several proposals for the

establishment of a working group to negotiate a treaty prohibiting such weaponization. As the CD operates by consensus and the US blocked the setting up of the working group, China acted on its own by submitting to the CD on 6 June 2001 the text of a draft treaty to prevent the weaponization of space. Unfortunately, the US was again able to block the move.

While the events of 11 September 2001 have shifted the focus of international attention to terrorism, Ambassador Dean believes that international civil society has to organize itself to oppose the weaponization of space. Such opposition is likely to attract the support of commercial users of space. It was estimated that there were over 200 commercial satellites in the year 2000, generating total revenues approaching \$3 trillion. The number of satellites is expected to increase to over 500 by the year 2005, while revenues will amount to \$6 trillion. It is likely that opposition to the weaponization of space through BMD may become an election issue by the time President Bush comes up for re-election in 2004.

INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS

The BMD initiative was seen internationally as a prime example of the “unilateralist” approach of the Bush administration, which has displayed scant regard for foreign opinion in defining its stance on major issues of global concern. The international response was further tempered by the terrorist attacks on the US on 11 September 2001.

It appeared that a unilateralist approach was not compatible with the global coalition that was forged against terrorism, making a co-ordinated international approach indispensable to contain the forces of global terrorism. However, the Bush administration has not abandoned the concept of BMD and has persisted with its programmes of technological research and testing to achieve the goal of absolute security that is central to the concept of BMD.

An evaluation of worldwide reactions involves the immediate response to the announcement of the BMD concept, as well as the evolution of that response in the light of the 11 September events and the subsequent diplomacy of the United States. For both convenience and clarity, this analysis will focus on major world players: the EU, Russia, Japan, China and South Asia (used in this paper to include India and Pakistan only).

Response of the European Union

The evolution of the European Community into the European Union (EU) in 1992 was followed by the adoption of a Common Foreign and Security Policy by the 15-member grouping whose economic clout is reflected increasingly in a more assertive and independent international role. Even as the Bush administration demonstrated a unilateralist approach in various areas, the EU did not conceal its concern or dissatisfaction. As the positions adopted by the EU have to reflect a consensus between member states, those positions tend more to conform to principles and shared objectives whereas the US is inclined to follow policies shaped by its national perceptions and great-power ambitions. This has resulted in the EU adopting attitudes and policies that tend to diverge from those of their trans-Atlantic ally, whose close association with European security concerns is still considered to be indispensable.

This divergence became manifest in European reactions to BMD, notably on the nature of the threat perceived from “rogue” states such as North Korea, Iraq or Iran. Europeans are inclined to go more deeply into what motivates the actions of these relatively small states, rather than proceeding on the basis of worst-case scenarios. North Korea’s development of ballistic missiles, for instance, is seen as an attempt to gain bargaining leverage in its search for economic assistance and international legitimacy.[13] When, in early 2001, President Bush put the missile talks with Pyongyang on hold, ostensibly on account of verification concerns, an alarmed EU

immediately filled the breach by announcing it would send a delegation to the Korean Peninsula for talks which would include the missiles issue. The Europeans also maintain that the right approach towards Iran is to encourage the reformist forces led by President Khatami, which are seeking to democratize the nation, rather than treat that country as an international pariah. Similarly, the Europeans held the belief that Saddam Hussein's regime could be controlled through the enforcement of UN sanctions.[14]

European defence ministers have been briefed by Washington on the potential ballistic missile threat from "rogue states", but they are inclined to think that the planned American response may be disproportionate to the threat. They also visualize the possibility of North Korea being persuaded to end its nuclear missile programme in return for economic benefits; that Iran can become a democratic and benign nation; and that Saddam Hussein's regime might disappear without external interference.[15]

A major factor in the differing US-EU perceptions on the question of BMD is their differing strategic cultures. The Americans base their assessment on actual and potential military capabilities, while the Europeans are more inclined to evaluate political intentions. The Americans, therefore, look to military solutions such as missile defence, whereas Europeans prefer political solutions. As the Foreign Affairs Committee of the British House of Commons noted in a report, "The USA overemphasizes the capability component of the threat equation, when it comes to assessing the extent of the threat it faces, and attaches too little importance to intention." [16]

Another difference in strategic culture can be attributed to contrasting acceptances of vulnerability. Europeans have lived through centuries of armed conflicts and their historical experience has taught them to live with vulnerability and uncertainty. In contrast, American soil had been inviolate, with the exception of the War of 1812, and therefore the concept of total security has an appeal that has been strengthened by the traumatic events of 11 September 2001.

The Europeans have also held a different concept of the relevance of the ABM Treaty, which they viewed as a vital component of strategic arms control once it had been agreed between the two superpowers in 1972. President Bush's view that the ABM Treaty was no longer relevant to the emerging realities, once the Cold War ended, was not shared widely in Europe. The movement of the US away from supporting arms control agreements such as the CTBT and the Ottawa Treaty on landmines is viewed by the EU as a troubling departure from multilateral co-operation for international security.

The immediate reaction among EU countries to President Bush's announcement of the BMD initiative on 1 May 2001 was not enthusiastic. Though Mr Bush declared that consultations with allies in Europe and elsewhere would figure prominently in the formulation of the concept, the fact is that it was launched unilaterally. When Secretary of State Colin Powell sought to win the support of NATO partners at a meeting of the Alliance in Budapest later the same month, he apparently failed to do so. However, he reassured them that the US would continue its participation in peacekeeping operations in the Balkans and that it would carry its NATO allies in all initiatives relating to their common security interests.[17]

With the forging of the "Coalition against Terrorism", following the 11 September attacks, the US has demanded close collaboration from its allies in Europe, most of which have participated actively in the war on terrorism. However, as the BMD concept remains operative and the ABM Treaty was formally denounced in December 2001 so that its validity expired six months later, the EU is likely to be swayed by its desire to maintain its strategic alliance with the US.

Apart from the imperatives of maintaining the Atlantic Alliance, the EU is on board as

regards close collaboration against terrorism. The realization is growing in European countries that their defence budgets, scaled down rapidly after the end of the Cold War, will have to be increased. This relates partly to ensuring the credibility of their peacekeeping role, for which a force of 50,000-60,000 is to be raised. However, participation in a US-Europe missile defence project will also involve substantial costs. Skepticism whether BMD is really necessary, when the real threat to US security may come from terrorists carrying nuclear or biological devices, persists. The European tradition of looking for political rather than military solutions also serves to reinforce doubts about US BMD plans. The EU is hopeful of persuading Washington to acquiesce to co-ordinated political management of international security.

Russia's Response

Ever since talk of NMD gained currency in the latter years of the Clinton presidency, Russian reactions have been hostile. Not only was NMD perceived as a strategy designed to ensure the hegemony of the US, it was also seen as contrary to the arms control efforts of the international community. The Bush administration's linkage of the concept to the repudiation of the ABM Treaty provoked a strong negative reaction from Moscow. Russia, like most European countries, considered the ABM Treaty central to the international security architecture and felt that its termination, following the US withdrawal, would result in an arms race that would affect both the economy and the security of the world. President Putin voiced his concerns to President Bush during their summit meeting in Slovenia in June 2001. President Bush responded by calling on Secretary of State Powell and Defence Secretary Rumsfeld to work with their Russian counterparts to begin discussions on a new security framework.[18]

Following a visit to Moscow by Rumsfeld in August 2001, Russia gave the green light to the missile shield plan, though conditionally, and agreed in principle to participate in a considerable reduction of nuclear warheads. The nature of the Russian response to BMD and other aspects of US foreign policy, such as the expansion of NATO, was determined mainly by the imperatives of Russian weakness after Moscow's defeat in the Cold War, and the economic meltdown that effectively reduced the former superpower to the status of a Third World country.

President Putin's primary concern has been to develop a relationship with the US and the EU that would safeguard Russia's economy by attracting investment and expanding trade. He therefore found it expedient to fall in with US unilateralism and to conclude agreements in May 2002 for a considerable reduction of nuclear stockpiles. He also decided to come to terms with the expansion of NATO and to accept a role in shaping NATO's strategies, thus removing the impression that NATO's principal concerns were centred on the threat of Russian expansion. More significantly, Russia was accepted as a full member of G-8 at a summit meeting in Canada in June 2002. While Russian concerns over the implications of a uni-polar world order and the hegemonic goals of BMD have not been allayed totally, President Putin is subordinating those concerns to the cultivation of a relationship with the West that will serve his country's interests in the immediate future. These interests-including securing support for his campaign against the Muslim nationalists in Chechnya-are well served by the commonality of approach between Washington and Moscow in their opposition to Islamic fundamentalism and its extremist manifestations.[19]

Japanese Reaction

Following the defeat of Japan in the Second World War, the new Japanese Constitution imposed by the US not only ordained a democratic system but also contained certain punitive provisions. These provisions limit Japan's defence expenditure to one per cent of the country's GDP and forbid it to use its defence forces beyond its borders. Japan's national security has been guaranteed by its alliance with the US, which has also extended a nuclear umbrella to its former adversary.

Not only was the treaty relationship between the US and Japan strengthened in the post-Cold War era but the US has also been urging Japan to assume a greater role in the region, commensurate with its status as the second largest economic power in the world. As such, Japan shares the security concerns of the US over the rising economic and military power of China.

The dominant political forces in Japan—indeed all major political parties—back the alliance with the US and view BMD as a welcome development. Japan's concerns over North Korea's nuclear and missile programmes and over China's emergence to great-power status have resulted in a move towards amending the Japanese Constitution, so that Japan can play a more effective role in co-operation with the US. It is expected that, as Japan overcomes its economic problems, it might move towards revising its Constitution. Such a move would "make Japan into Asia's Britain" in support of the US,[20] a change favoured by the Bush administration.

Some Japanese intellectuals are of the view that the result of Japan's becoming a military ally of the US would be a hardening of China's attitude, since China is opposed to any resurgence of Japanese militarism. It feels that Japan's role should be to promote Asian unity by spreading its constitutional pacifism and following in Europe's footsteps.[21]

IMPACT OF BMD ON CHINA

China's reactions to earlier US NMD and Theatre Missile Defence (TMD) plans had always been negative. This was among the factors that led Clinton to abandon the project he had initiated during his second term. With the election of George W. Bush in 2000, the rhetoric of his close associates signalled a shift in US-China relations from the "strategic partnership" evolved by President Clinton to that of "strategic competition". Therefore, when President Bush announced his BMD plan, on 1 May 2001, China reiterated its objections in a forceful manner.

At the international conference on "The International Arms Control Regime: Challenges Ahead" held in Beijing in October 2001, the topic of BMD and its implications figured prominently. The Conference, sponsored by the Ford Foundation, was attended by experts from the five recognized nuclear powers as well as the two countries in South Asia that went overtly nuclear in 1998, namely, India and Pakistan. Other participants were from Germany, and North and South Korea. A large number of Chinese scholars participated. The impact of the unilateralist policy of the Bush Administration in the sphere of arms control was discussed at several sessions.

It emerged from the proceedings that Chinese academics and experts had serious misgivings about US plans to build an "impenetrable shield" against missiles fired at it. Though aimed ostensibly at "rogue" states such as North Korea, Iraq, Iran and Libya, the acquisition of such a shield would have the effect of neutralizing the nuclear deterrence of Russia and China.

The Chinese analysis of BMD and its implications is well-thought out. China has joined the current Arms Control Regime in the interest of global strategic stability. The Chinese opposition to US plans for missile defence is related to two factors:[22]

- i. US acquisition of BMD would allow it to intervene with impunity in any future crisis in the Taiwan straits.
- ii. A missile defence system capable of defeating long-range missiles from "rogue" states would render China's limited long-range missile force ineffective and would leave that country vulnerable to US pressure.

If, therefore, President Bush persists in his plans for BMD, it might eventually become the cause of a potential crisis between the US and China. Though not itself a party to the ABM Treaty, China has always considered that Treaty an important factor in global strategic stability. The US decision to abrogate the Treaty has had the effect of overwhelming the minimum defensive deterrence (MDD) of China, putting it back to the security situation prevailing in the early 1960s, when China had not yet demonstrated its nuclear capability. [23]

The existing level of the nuclear forces of the US and China-whether evaluated quantitatively or qualitatively-is marked by extreme asymmetry. Even in terms of conventional forces, the US enjoys qualitative superiority. More important is the existing lack of reciprocity in nuclear strategy, since US is basing its deterrence on possible first use of nuclear weapons, whereas China has firmly adhered to the policy of non-first use that it pledged at the time of its first nuclear test in 1964.

Despite this lack of reciprocity, in a significant compromise, China signed the CTBT in 1996 to demonstrate its resolve to play a responsible role in arms control measures. However, the US chose to ignore the desire of China as well as other world powers for some element of balance when it withdrew from the ABM Treaty, the spirit of which was important because it could compensate China for the extreme asymmetry and extreme non-reciprocity of nuclear strategy as well as provide it with a measure of confidence.

US unilateralism as manifested in its BMD plans will help create an “absolute security assurance scenario”, as the US “wants to hold the sharpest spear with one hand while it holds the most unbreakable shield with the other”. This will enable the US to ensure an “absolute and overwhelming superiority in any kind of possible conflict with the other states at any time.” [24]

Given this scenario, China may well be forced to consider abandoning its nuclear doctrine in favour of enlarging its arsenal. Any such build-up, however, would be counter to China’s top priority goal of economic development. Furthermore, since 1964, three generations of national leadership in China have stood firmly by the non-first-use pledge. In the light of these considerations, it is extremely unlikely that China will opt to enter into a nuclear arms race with the US.

The minimum response by China, should the US go ahead with its BMD plans, would be to develop penetration and countermeasure systems of nuclear weapons that fall short of an arms race. Simultaneously, China will no doubt seek a stable and constructive strategic relationship with the US. Such an approach would conform to China’s policy of according top priority to economic development while facilitating a peaceful settlement of the Taiwan issue. It would also suit the US which is interested in a stable and prosperous East Asia and needs China’s co-operation on such important issues as anti-terrorism and non-proliferation.

Following the APEC summit in Shanghai in October 2001, the relationship between the US and China, which had suffered from Bush’s unilateralist approach prior to the 11 September events, moved towards greater engagement. Perhaps the most important issue on which an agreement is needed is Taiwan. A bilateral no-first-use agreement will also help in building a stable and constructive relationship between the two countries; that, in turn, will contribute materially to global stability.

China and South Asia

China’s response to BMD is largely political and its objections are based on considerations of global strategic stability. However, should protests prove unavailing, leading China to embark on the

path of expanding its nuclear and missile forces in order to maintain a nuclear deterrent, there are bound to be repercussions in South Asia, where India and Pakistan went overtly nuclear in 1998. As recognized by most Indian scholars, India, China and Pakistan constitute a “security triangle”, and China has come to regard Pakistan as a counterweight to India.[25]

Being the only great power with borders with the South Asian subcontinent, China has sought cordial relations with India and Pakistan, countries that are its neighbours across the highest mountains in the world. As the People’s Republic of China inherited borders that were either not demarcated or had been largely dictated by colonial powers, re-negotiating and demarcating borders was a major concern of the government in its early years. China adopted a reasonable and accommodating attitude in concluding boundary agreements with the thirteen countries with which it shares borders. Problems were encountered with only two of them: the Soviet Union and India; and it is with them that China has the longest borders.

The boundary between China and Pakistan was agreed amicably in 1963 and the only possible cause of dispute eliminated. Since then, Sino-Pakistan relations have become a model of friendship between neighbours with different social systems. On the other hand, following a friendly start in 1949, relations between China and India deteriorated, principally because of the insistence of successive Indian governments that a line drawn by British rulers be accepted as the international border. The Sino-Indian boundary continued to be disputed, affecting relations between the two countries to a point where an armed conflict occurred between them in 1962, due to India’s forward policy at the border.[26]

Sino-Pakistan and Sino-Indian relations have followed different trajectories since the 1960s. India’s international alignment, including its strategic consensus with the Soviet Union during the Cold War and the growing convergence with the US since then, was largely predicated on confrontation with China. With its Cold-War alliance relationship with the US subject to roller-coaster swings, Pakistan’s national security was predicated mainly on its strategic partnership with China.

India believes that China and Pakistan have established a nexus inimical to India and that Premier Zhou Enlai “abandoned neutrality on Kashmir” in 1964 during his visit to Pakistan. The military co-operation that emerged after 1965 between China and Pakistan has been a “source of consternation” in India. Over the years, 70 per cent of Pakistan’s military equipment has come from China. Nuclear co-operation between the two countries began in the 1970s. The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 provided strategic reasoning for Sino-Pakistan nuclear co-operation. Beijing’s transfer of M-II Missiles to Pakistan was confirmed by Zhu Qizhen, the Chinese Ambassador to the US.[27]

China’s co-operation with Pakistan in the nuclear and missile technology fields, including the transfer of M-II missiles, has attracted international attention, especially that of the US. Since the 1990s, China is believed to have provided help to Pakistan in maintaining nuclear-weapon and missile-delivery capability to ensure its security.[28] Where Pakistan is concerned, the US has been prompt in expressing its adherence to non-proliferation of nuclear technology, enforcing Pakistan-specific legislation, notably since 1990 when the Pressler Amendment took effect. On the other hand, India has had access to technology both from the West, from Israel and from the former Soviet Union, taking advantage of the US policy of containing China. Though China is not a member of the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), it has made repeated pledges to observe that regime, but has been accused of violating it. Washington has engaged China in negotiations, sometimes offering economic incentives and imposing economic sanctions at others. China has recently linked its MTCR commitments to its own security concerns, including TMD arms sales to Taiwan and the US decision to deploy NMD. Bilateral co-operation between US and China is likely

to stagnate should the US pursue its BMD policy.[29]

Having made economic development its top priority from 1978 onwards, China has sought to accentuate the positive aspects of its relations with India, while playing down differences. As a result, China's strategic decisions on Indo-Pakistan differences have recently been marked by the following features:

- i. Marked neutrality, for instance on Kashmir;
- ii. Avoidance of conflict situations;
- iii. De-emphasis of issues relating to territoriality.

Overall, as China has gained strength through rapid economic growth, it has concurrently deepened interaction globally: China's attitude and policies are increasingly determined by its "comprehensive engagement with the international system." [30]

The rise to power of the Hindu-extremist-dominated BJP Government in New Delhi led to India going overtly nuclear in May 1998. Prior to conducting tests, the Indian Defence Minister, George Fernandes, stated in April that China constituted the main threat to India's security. In letters written to Western leaders, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee recalled that India had suffered Chinese aggression in 1962, while also having to contend with a hostile Pakistan. This led China to react strongly and to issue a public statement, taking exception to India's using the "China threat" to develop nuclear weapons in pursuit of its hegemonic goals in South Asia, demonstrating contempt for the desire of the international community for nuclear disarmament. [31] Although China also criticized Pakistan's nuclear tests, conducted a fortnight later, it placed the blame for the resultant tensions on India.

Though Sino-Indian tensions that arose after the nuclear tests subsided over the subsequent two years, the divergent response of the two countries to President Bush's NMD initiative, announced on 1 May 2001, once again underlined their differences. India's hasty announcement of its approval for the US concept of missile defence was tailored to the twin aims of consolidating its strategic convergence with Washington and creating justification for developing a BMD system of its own. China, on the other hand, had strong reservations about the US concept for reasons already provided. Pakistan had apprehensions of its own about India's BMD plans that appeared designed to undermine Pakistan's nuclear deterrence and were bound to exacerbate the arms race in South Asia.

BMD AND SOUTH ASIA

Thirty years after the NPT came into force in 1968, India and Pakistan are the only states that have publicly declared themselves nuclear weapons states, following the underground nuclear tests conducted by both countries in 1998. Their emergence as nuclear weapon states creates, for the first time, a geographically contiguous nuclear-armed triangle in juxtaposition with nuclear China. Significantly, each member of this nuclear triangle has made war on at least one of the others: China and India fought over their disputed Himalayan boundaries in 1962 and India and Pakistan have gone to war three times, in 1948, 1965 and 1971. [32]

This triangular relationship continues to be relevant as the US concept of missile defence enunciated in May 2001, reinforced by the Bush doctrine of pre-emption, impacts Asia more than any other continent. The war against terror started with the operations of the global coalition in

Afghanistan and is now largely focused on the Middle East. The US has established itself militarily not only in Afghanistan, but also in Central Asia. Pakistan has been willingly co-opted as its partner in the war against terror, with a major role in the ongoing operations in those regions of Afghanistan that are contiguous with the tribal areas of Pakistan. However, India is being cultivated as a strategic partner in the larger context. Apart from holding joint military exercises with the Indian armed forces, the US has also invited India to join its naval forces in patrolling the sea-lanes from the Persian Gulf to the Molucca Straits. India was also the first major country to welcome the concept of NMD; it has its own agenda in following the US lead: achieving its goal of regional hegemony. US strategists view India as a natural counterweight to China, whose status as the world's most populous country India will assume in a couple of decades, owing to a more rapid rate of population growth.

The manner in which India and Pakistan gained independence in 1947 set them on a confrontational path, to which no end appears to be in the sight. The rejection by the Hindu elite that dominates India of the two-nation theory-the basis of the partition of the subcontinent-is reflected most seriously in the Kashmir dispute. The adversarial relationship between the two countries can be best understood in the historical perspective.

Historical Background

The subcontinent's chequered history includes some 800 years when it was ruled by Muslim dynasties, the last being the Mughals, who held power for nearly three centuries. During this time, Islam spread mainly in the northeast and the northwest of the subcontinent; the Muslim and Hindu communities tended to live separately, as the Hindu caste-system strongly discouraged social and physical contact not only with non-Hindus but even with low-caste co-religionists.

The Muslim period was followed by British colonial rule, during which Hindus forged ahead by adopting western education, while the Muslims paid for their sullen rejection of external rule by falling behind economically and politically. The movement for greater political rights, as started in 1885 by an Englishman, A. O. Hume, was dominated by the Hindus. It took until 1906 for the Muslims to organize the All-India Muslim League to safeguard the political rights of their community.

It is necessary to recall that when Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah entered politics around this time, he was keenly aware of the advantages of Hindus and Muslims struggling jointly against foreign rule. He came to be known as the "Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity" and, for a while, it looked as if the two communities would work together, notably when they co-operated in a movement against the British between 1919 and 1922. However, by the third decade of the twentieth century, the Hindu movements for *shudhi* (re-conversion to Hinduism) and *sangatan* (militancy in furthering Hindu objectives) it was amply evident that the most active and aggressive elements among the Hindus wanted to dominate the subcontinent. This was further confirmed after the elections held in 1937, when the Congress Party formed the government in eleven provinces, showing scant regard for the sensitivities and rights of the Muslim minority. It was a sad and disappointed Mr Jinnah who came to the conclusion that the Muslims should seek a separate homeland on the basis of the two-nation theory.

The Pakistan Resolution was passed on 22 March 1940 in Lahore; it demanded "separate homelands" for Muslims in those parts of India where they were in a majority. The Congress Party, which claimed to represent all segments of the population of India, opposed this demand tooth and nail. The British colonial rulers, under pressure in the Second World War, tried to secure popular backing for the war effort by promising to respect the growing movement for self-rule. It may be mentioned that, till the closing months of the Second World War, the government in London,

headed by Sir Winston Churchill, strongly opposed the nationalist struggle in India. However, the Labour Party, under Mr Clement Attlee won the general election in the summer of 1945 and showed a readiness to respond positively to the growing movement in India for self-rule.

In the course of its parleys with the leaders of various political parties in India during 1946 and 1947, the British government tried to preserve the fabric of unity of the sub-continent by introducing the concept of “autonomous zones”. However, the Congress leadership was not prepared to accommodate the concerns of the Muslim population and, amid escalating communal violence, the British finally accepted the Muslim demand for partition. Realizing that this was the price for independence, the Congress leadership reluctantly agreed and the two dominions of India and Pakistan emerged in August 1947. However, the majority Hindus never really accepted the basis on which Pakistan emerged, namely, the two-nation theory. As such, the history of South Asia since 1947 has been one of conflict and confrontation, with India trying to weaken Pakistan with the eventual goal of securing Akhand Bharat, that is, united India. Pakistan’s foreign and security policy has always been centred on countering this threat to its survival. It is against this background that the nuclear programmes and the post-nuclear policies and attitudes of the two countries must be evaluated.

India’s Nuclear Policy

India gave high priority to developing its nuclear capability right from independence. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, its first Prime Minister, visualized India as one of the great powers of the world as early as 1946. Since then, nuclear technology has been promoted both as a status symbol and as a means to economic development. India set up a Department of Atomic Energy in 1954 and was able to secure technological assistance from both the West and from the then Soviet Union. In 1956, the Bhaba Atomic Research Centre was established at Trombay, Mumbai, with Canadian assistance and the first Indian research reactor, CIRUS, was set up.

Defeat in the Sino-Indian war in 1962 led New Delhi to take the decision to develop full-fledged nuclear capability. This was facilitated by the fact that India had had hundreds of its scientists trained in various “atoms for peace” programmes launched by the US, the Soviet Union, France, the UK and Canada in the late 1950s. In 1964, India set up a reprocessing plant with British help and, with the CIRUS reactor in operation, acquired the ability to extract 13 kg of weapon-grade plutonium, enough to make two bombs a year. There is proof that India’s acquisition of this capability preceded the Chinese nuclear explosion of October 1964.[33]

A political decision was taken in 1965 to go for nuclear weapons capability, but it took several years to acquire the complex technology. Furthermore, the negotiations for a non-proliferation treaty had started, putting constraints on India’s nuclear programme. Though Prime Minister Indira Gandhi promised more “good news” after the creation of Bangladesh in December 1971, it was not till May 1974 that India carried out an underground nuclear explosion. This was a blow not only to the non-proliferation efforts of the nuclear-weapons states but also changed adversely the security climate of South Asia. Pakistan raised the matter with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). A senior official of the Agency told the Pakistani delegate that, “Even though it was India which had carried out the nuclear explosion, it would be Pakistan which would be punished for that.”[34]

As India’s nuclear programme progressed in the 1960s and 1970s, work also started on a missile programme, meant to provide the means of delivering nuclear weapons. A comprehensive programme of action was finalized in 1983, envisaging the manufacture of a whole series of missiles, ranging from short-range to medium- and long-range ones. *Prithvi*, a short-range missile, was test fired in 1988 and went into production in 1994. It is a Pakistan-specific missile with a

range of 150-250 kilometres, thus covering about 90 per cent of all urban and industrial targets in Pakistan. The *Agni*, with a range of 1500-2500 kilometres, was first tested in 1992. India has been developing its own nuclear submarine on the basis of expertise and technology provided by Russia; the prototype is likely to be ready by 2004.[35]

After its peaceful nuclear explosion of 1974, India waited for 24 years to carry out nuclear weapon tests in May 1998. There are indications that, in view of the fluid situation that followed the end of the Cold War and in the light of the paradigm shift that took place in US perceptions, notably in terms of the perceived threat from fundamentalist Islam, the Indian leadership considered going nuclear even before the BJP formed a government. Congress Prime Minister, Narasimha Rao, came close to ordering tests in 1995. It was, however, after the Hindu-extremist BJP formed a coalition government in March 1998 that the decision was taken to conduct a series of tests to demonstrate India's nuclear capability.

The motives behind this decision can be summarized as follows:[36]

- i. India's ambition for great-power status. Military power, especially in the nuclear and missile spheres, was seen as the currency for such status.
- ii. To cater to national "Hindu pride", demonstrating that India was second to none in scientific, technical and military power.
- iii. To strengthen the BJP's position in the domestic context, since the party had been obliged to dilute its goals in forming a coalition government.

Immediately after the tests on 11 and 13 May 1998, Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee announced that India had become a nuclear power. Other BJP leaders proceeded to threaten Pakistan on the basis of India's demonstrated nuclear muscle, notably by calling on Pakistan to vacate Azad Kashmir.

Though Pakistan's own nuclear tests, conducted on 28 and 30 May 1998, had the effect of restoring the strategic balance in South Asia and imposing a constraint on India's aggressive designs, India found the evolving global scenario highly encouraging for its ambitions. It announced its draft nuclear doctrine in August 1999 and, in doing so, took advantage of a burgeoning relationship with the US that accepted India's nuclear status and began viewing it as a potential partner in containing China. As a *Washington Times* report put it in October 1999, "India is eclipsing Pakistan as an American ally." [37] India was successful in presenting itself as a frontline state in the battle against what it brands as religious-driven cross-border terrorism in Indian-held Kashmir.[38] Thanks to the changing international scenario, India has felt encouraged in pursuing proactive diplomacy, aimed at weakening and isolating Pakistan, the only power in South Asia that stands in the way of its attainment of the goal of regional hegemony.

India's draft nuclear doctrine, announced in August 1999, is stated to be a "minimum credible defense doctrine" but in reality is more ambitious than the existing nuclear capability of any of the recognized nuclear powers, with the exception of the US and Russia. It is based on a triad of nuclear-delivery capability, by land, sea and air, reinforced by an anti-ballistic missile defence system. It is designed to confer not only a first-strike capability but also a retaliatory or second-strike capability; it also envisages the use of battlefield or tactical nuclear weapons. The total number of warheads to be deployed eventually is estimated at between 400 and 500.

India's draft nuclear doctrine was made public when the Indian election campaign was in full swing and was therefore seen more as an electoral ploy than a serious or official policy. The

fact, however, remains that it was formulated by a large group of experts and, over the succeeding period, financial costs and scientific plans have been worked out on the assumption that its broad goals and strategy will become state policy. In any case, its ultimate objective, that of winning for India great-power status through admission as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, remains the centrepiece of New Delhi's diplomacy.

Pakistan's Nuclear Response

As Pakistan emerged on the map of the world in August 1947, its fledgling government was totally preoccupied with the problem of caring for nearly 7 million refugees internally, while dealing with a conflict in Kashmir externally. As such, it did not get around to tackling issues of science and technology, especially that of harnessing nuclear energy, until after India had made considerable headway. It was only after the US announced its "atoms for peace" programme and the UN organized the first conference on "The Peaceful Use of Atomic Energy" in 1955 in Geneva that an Atomic Energy Committee was formed. In 1957, the Committee was transformed into the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC).[39]

Three years later, negotiations were started to establish the Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (Pinstech) for which a research reactor was acquired with US help under the "atoms for peace" programme and a number of scientists went to the US for training. Canada also agreed to provide a 126MW reactor to Pakistan, after it had provided 2x220MW power reactors to India. The reactor was not commissioned till 1969 as, at that time, Pakistan's main concern was economic development. It was only after defeat at the hands of India and the separation of East Pakistan in 1971 that the need to ensure the country's integrity and survival led Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to begin in earnest the pursuit of nuclear capability.

India's nuclear explosion of 18 May 1974 did not come as a surprise to Pakistan, but the muted international reaction did. Pakistan tried to arouse concern through various diplomatic initiatives, but the actual result was that greater pressure was exerted on Pakistan not to follow the nuclear path. Though considerable progress had been made in negotiations with France for a reprocessing plant, with Canada for a fuel fabrication plant and with West Germany for a heavy water plant, all these countries were forced to cancel their agreements under intense US pressure. Even negotiations for a 600 MW nuclear power plant from France under IAEA safeguards were terminated. These were setbacks that steeled the resolve of the government and people of Pakistan to acquire essential nuclear technology indigenously.

As stated above, shortly after assuming the leadership of Pakistan in December 1971, Prime Minister Bhutto had decided that Pakistan must acquire nuclear capability. He found the scientist to achieve this goal in Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan, who had specialized in metallurgy and uranium enrichment during his studies in Europe. He set up the Khan Research Laboratories at Kahuta in 1976 and made rapid progress, despite international restrictions on materials and technology needed for the plant.[40] Though Bhutto was removed from power in 1977, the succeeding government, led by General Ziaul Haq, continued the programme so that, in February 1984, Pakistan was able to announce that it had succeeded in producing weapon-grade uranium. A great deal of design and fabrication work was carried out at PAEC, and the nation acquired nuclear capability in 1987, as accepted by military experts in the West.

It has to be stressed that Pakistan was forced to adopt the nuclear path on account of the perceived threat from a hostile India. Basically, Pakistan had been consistently supportive of moves for nuclear non-proliferation and voted for the NPT in the UN General Assembly in 1968. When the NPT was opened for signature that year, Pakistan announced that it shared the objectives of the treaty, despite the discriminatory nature of its provisions, and that it was willing

to sign it, provided India also did so.

What emerges from a study of the nuclear policies of the West in South Asia, notably those of the US, is that an element of prejudice against the Muslim world is manifest. Much of the US legislation imposing sanctions against nuclear proliferation tended to be Pakistan-specific, since it was feared that advances made by Pakistan might eventually be shared with other Muslim countries, including radical countries like Iran and Libya. Therefore, while the US tended to look the other way when India made significant advances in nuclear technology, Pakistan's nuclear programme was perceived to be aimed at making an "Islamic bomb". It was only in 1976 that the US Congress passed the Symington Amendment, imposing sanctions on non-nuclear-weapon states that build a reprocessing or enrichment plant without full NPT safeguards. The legislation paved the way for cutting off economic and military co-operation with Pakistan in May 1979.[41]

In December 1979, the Soviet Union intervened militarily in Afghanistan. This event brought about a dramatic change in the attitude of the US. In 1980, President Carter offered an aid package of \$400 million to help bolster Pakistan's defence. President Ziaul Haq rejected this as "peanuts"; however, Pakistan assumed the role of a frontline state in terms of facing the Soviet threat and assisting the Afghans in their struggle against Soviet occupation. President Reagan, who came to power in 1981, revived US aid to Pakistan on a large scale, offering a package of over \$3 billion in military and economic aid. The pressure to sign the NPT was eased; indeed, the US looked the other way as Pakistan made rapid headway towards nuclear-weapon status.

In response to persistent international pressure, Pakistan made several proposals, offering a wide range of options to India for meaningful steps towards the denuclearization of South Asia and for the prevention of a nuclear arms race in the region. Pakistan's readiness to go along with any non-proliferation moves acceptable to India showed that it anticipated a nuclear threat from India alone. However, India refused to accept any of the offers, citing two reasons. Firstly, it perceived a threat from China; secondly, it wanted all nuclear-weapon states to commit themselves to nuclear disarmament. To show its seriousness in supporting worldwide nuclear disarmament, India co-sponsored a resolution in 1995 calling for the conclusion of the CTBT. However, when, contrary to its expectations, rapid progress was achieved on CTBT, India backed off, confirming the impression that it wanted to retain its option of nuclear weapons testing in defiance of world public opinion.

South Asian Nuclear Tests and After

Immediately after the formation of the BJP-led government in India in March 1998, the process of overt nuclearization was set in motion. The BJP government's plan for weaponizing India's nuclear capability was designed to ensure New Delhi's hegemony in South Asia and to prepare the ground to implement the second major item of its agenda: that of settling the Kashmir dispute on Indian terms. The third goal was to establish India's claim to great-power status, the ultimate reflection of which is being sought in acquisition of permanent membership in an expanded UN Security Council.

The BJP leaders justified the tests of 11 and 13 May 1998 on the basis of perceived threats to India's security from China and Pakistan. The threats and warnings to Pakistan issued by the Indian leaders suggested aggressive action in Kashmir. Home Minister, L. K Advani, vowed on 18 May to end the Pakistan menace and called upon Pakistan to roll back its hostile policy in Kashmir.[42] Madan Lal Khurana, Union Minister for Parliamentary Affairs and Tourism, proclaimed on 20 May 98 in Jammu that India was now "among the nuclear powers of the world", warning Pakistan that India was ready to fight a fourth war and that plans had been prepared to eliminate "militancy" in Jammu and Kashmir.[43] Two days later, Ashok Singhal, President of the Vishwa

Hindu Parishad, stated in Patna that a war was needed to teach Pakistan a lesson.

These threats, together with the absence of credible security guarantees from the international community, obliged Pakistan to conduct its own tests on 28 and 30 May. The resultant situation appeared to have falsified expectations of political and strategic gains for India. On the contrary, Pakistan had achieved nuclear parity and blunted India's conventional edge. Furthermore, the Kashmir issue was seen all over the world as the underlying cause of tension between the two countries, one that could precipitate a nuclear conflict. The prestigious newspaper, *Frontline*, published in Chennai, carried this statement on 5 June 1998: "The nuclear tests by the BJP-led government have irrevocably altered India's strategic doctrine, undermined its policy of constructive engagement with its neighbours, and invited a global backlash". Recalling that the US nuclear programme had cost \$5 trillion since 1944, the paper concluded that India was clearly in no position to enter the cul-de-sac of a nuclear arms race.[44]

Response of the Major Powers

During the period when the nuclear programmes of India and Pakistan were cloaked in ambiguity, the major powers tended to be permissive towards India's ambitions, displaying a bias against the acquisition of nuclear capability by Pakistan for reasons given earlier. Pakistan's vital role in co-ordinating international opposition to the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan had held back punitive action by Washington. Once the objective of Soviet withdrawal had been achieved, the US began enforcing its non-proliferation agenda. President Bush (senior) enforced the Pressler Law in 1990, soon after the end of the Cold War. In the post-Cold War years, with Islamic fundamentalism and religious extremism perceived as the primary threats to peace and security in many parts of the world, the major powers, with the exception of China, adopted an attitude towards the South Asian countries that was biased in favour of India.

The response of the international community to the nuclear tests conducted in May 1998 by India and Pakistan can be summarized thus:

- i. The P-5 (the five Permanent members of the Security Council) condemned the tests and called on India and Pakistan to adhere to the non-proliferation regime by signing the CTBT and the NPT. In Resolution 1172, the Security Council also called for the peaceful settlement of political disputes, especially Kashmir, in order to reduce the risk of a war that could turn nuclear. The G-8 countries adopted a similar stand.
- ii. The major donor countries slapped sanctions against India and Pakistan, terminating all economic and technical aid. This affected Pakistan to a greater degree, since it was much more vulnerable economically.
- iii. The US took upon itself the task of initiating a high-level dialogue with both countries in the aftermath of the tests. Deputy Secretary of State, Strobe Talbott, engaged in shuttle diplomacy, holding several rounds of talks with official foreign ministry delegations led by Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh in India and by Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed in Pakistan.

India and Pakistan responded to international concerns by taking a series of steps:

- i. Both declared a moratorium on further testing, while taking their time over the demand to sign the CTBT, both pleading a lack of domestic consensus on the issue.
- ii. Both passed legislation designed to ensure that sensitive technology was not

transferred to third countries.

- iii. They responded to the demand to cut off production of further missile material by agreeing to participate in the negotiations for a Fissile Material Cut-Off Treaty (FMCT) whenever these were initiated.
- iv. They showed a readiness to introduce confidence-building measures (CBMs) and initiate a peaceful dialogue designed to resolve political disputes, notably the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir.

It is noteworthy that, though the US started with a tough stance through the enforcement of sanctions, its lawmakers rejected sanctions as a tool in implementing the non-proliferation policy. In this change, the expatriate Indian and Pakistani communities in the US were able to exercise a decisive influence. The two Brownback Amendments adopted in 1998 and 1999 gave the President the authority to waive certain provisions of the Glenn, Symington and Pressler Amendments in order to ease the pressure on India and Pakistan, and to enable traditional US exports to the two countries, while maintaining restrictions on military assistance, dual-use exports and military sales.[45]

Emerging Postures and BMD

Responsible analysts in both India and Pakistan have shown growing concern over the direction in which the traditional rivals have moved; their concern is heightened as little concrete progress has been made towards CBMs to prevent a nuclear exchange, pending progress towards resolving political differences through dialogue. Writing in the weekly magazine of the *Hindu* in March 2002, A. G. Noorani opined that the Pokhran tests in 1974 and 1998 were both politically motivated, and that only “a brave and statesman-like leadership can arrest the trend and accomplish a modus vivendi between India and Pakistan.”[46]

A beginning was made in February 1999 when, among the documents agreed as a result of the “bus summit” in Lahore between the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries. It focused on CBMs to prevent the outbreak of a nuclear conflict through accident or misunderstanding. The MoU was an important document, addressing the urgent problem of nuclear risk reduction, a problem that needed to be tackled at the earliest, since even with the best will, the resolution of political problems is bound to be a time-consuming process.[47]

In the absence of official-level talks, the task of introducing CBMs was taken in hand through a dialogue at the academic level between think-tanks in the two countries: the Delhi Policy Group and the Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) held two meetings, the first in Delhi in August 2000, and the second in Islamabad in January 2001. A third meeting was to be held in India in January 2002, but became a casualty of the stand-off between the two countries as a result of a terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001.

The fundamental difference between the nuclear postures of India and Pakistan is that India seeks great-power status and regional hegemony while Pakistan’s concerns are security related. As India constantly expands the horizons of its ambitions, ambitions that now appear to have tacit Western approval, a virtual arms race has developed in a region with the highest incidence of absolute poverty in the world. Given the risks of nuclear conflict in an environment characterized by a total lack of trust, making South Asia the “most dangerous place in the world”, there is an imperative need to establish good communications as well as a dialogue. This need is recognized by academics and experts. One can only hope that this recognition permeates to the

political level, both in South Asia and in the world at large, where the perils arising out of BMD are already being realized.

NORTH KOREA'S NUCLEAR PROGRAMME

North Korea's nuclear programme has emerged as a significant issue that affects not only East Asia but also the global nuclear scenario. In many ways, the situation in the Korean peninsula is perhaps the last problem left over from the Cold War that ended in 1989. In Europe, the solution was found in the defeat and collapse of the Soviet Union, followed by the elimination of the communist regimes that had been imposed on East European countries. However, in the Korean peninsula, North Korea, which emerged under Soviet patronage, has acquired a military and nuclear capability that the communist regime there is using to safeguard its interests. The Cold War confrontation continues, with some 37,000 US troops deployed in South Korea, while North Korea maintains arguably the largest military establishment in the world in proportion to its population and size. It has also acquired nuclear and missile capabilities, persuading President George W. Bush to opt for negotiation rather than the military pre-emption he has chosen to employ against Iraq.

What makes North Korea highly relevant to the implications of BMD for China and South Asia is that a link is being alleged between the nuclear and missile programmes of North Korea and Pakistan. The manner in which this link has been played up suggests that it is being used to pressurize the government of President Musharraf to conform to the US agenda. The pressure has been so intense that, for a while, the question, "Is Pakistan next after Iraq?" was actively raised in the print media in Pakistan. However, Pakistan has apparently shown the correct mixture of compliance with US strategic objectives and of articulation of its legitimate national concerns to ward off the threat.

Since the end of the Cold War, North Korea has emerged as a special source of threat and military instability in its region. Ruled first by Kim Il Sung and, after his death, by his son, Kim Jong Il, the country's economy has been in crisis owing to natural disasters such as drought and floods, the effects of which have been exacerbated by a military dictatorship obsessed with assuring its survival by maintaining a disproportionately large armed force, and more particularly, by acquiring nuclear and missile capability.

Agreed Framework Agreement of 1994

During President Clinton's administration, when tensions had risen over North Korea's nuclear programme, the US played a leading role in promoting the agreed framework that was signed in Geneva on 21 October 1994. Energy-starved North Korea agreed to freeze its nuclear programme in return for two modern light-water reactors to be built by a US-led consortium.[48] Though the reactors were scheduled to be completed by 2003, work was delayed and, in the meantime, North Korea continued its clandestine programme, the details of which were revealed in October 2002 to a senior US official at a time Washington was getting ready to wage war on Iraq. Under the agreed framework, the IAEA was supposed to carry out full nuclear inspections in North Korea, but Pyongyang has rebuffed demands for inspections. The US and its partners have become less interested in the KEDO project (for building the nuclear reactors), a Clinton era compromise at odds with Bush's tougher foreign policy stance.[49]

It is believed that North Korea is deliberately drawing attention to its nuclear capability, hoping to trade that capability for economic aid. The strategy worked in 1994, but could backfire now.[50]

Evolving Scenario in East Asia

The end of the Cold War in 1989, followed by the disintegration of the Soviet Union two years later, in effect shifted the theatre of the global power contest to the Asia Pacific region. With the economies of East Asian and the South East Asian countries expanding rapidly, the Asia Pacific region overtook the Trans-Atlantic region in total production, with major inputs coming from China, Japan, South Korea and the other “tiger” economies of the region. The US has emphasized the development of a security structure in East Asia that safeguards its vital interests. The security agreement with Japan was reinforced and bilateral arrangements with other countries such as South Korea, the Taiwan region of China and individual South East Asian countries strengthened for the purpose of maintaining and increasing US dominance over East Asian affairs.[51]

The Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) provided a forum for a multilateral dialogue in 1995 when they invited other major powers, including China, the US, Japan, Russia and India to the ASEAN Regional Forum meeting held at the foreign minister level. However, while the ASEAN Regional Forum has provided a useful multilateral mechanism, elements of instability persist in the perception of a “Chinese threat” in the US and Japan, the two countries with the largest defence budgets in the world.

In 1993, the Clinton administration started with an adversarial view of China. Later, President Clinton developed a relationship that was described as a “strategic partnership”. After the Bush victory in 2000, the spokespersons of the new administration stated that they regarded China as a “strategic competitor” rather than as a partner. Well into the third year of the Bush administration, the US has a slightly modified perception of China’s world role and the Chinese stance on the nuclear threat from North Korea has been generally appreciated in Washington.

Rationale of the North Korean Strategy

As the Bush administration has adopted the policy of using its military and technological superiority to achieve hegemony, North Korea has defied Washington in order to secure political recognition and economic benefits. It was during the visit of US Assistant Secretary of State, James Kelly, to Pyongyang in October 2002 that North Korea made known its capacity to make nuclear weapons. The US, which was using the perceived threat of WMD in Iraq as justification for waging war against that country, found itself obliged to follow a different strategy on account of North Korea’s capability of inflicting what the US considered an unacceptable level of damage in a conflict involving South Korea. Indeed, the US came under strong pressure from Japan and South Korea not to concentrate on the military option, but to resolve the matter with North Korea through negotiations.

The distinctive feature of North Korea’s nuclear programme is that, instead of caving in under pressure, the nation is clearly intent on exploiting its nuclear and missile capabilities to secure political and economic rewards. In December 2002, North Korea expelled the IAEA inspectors from its territory, which the IAEA regretted. North Korea also demanded the right to hold direct negotiations with the US, whereas Washington prefers a multilateral forum with North and South Korea joined by China and the US. When questions pertaining to the plutonium route to nuclear weapons were brought up, North Korea claimed success in uranium enrichment, though some Western reports trace this technology to Pakistan. The ground reality, acknowledged by US Defence Secretary, Rumsfeld, in February 2003 was that North Korea could produce 6-8 nuclear weapons. On 9 June 2003, with all major powers, including China and Russia, in favour of a nuclear-free Korean peninsula, North Korea’s game plan was clearly to extract major economic and political concessions before agreeing to any demands. The North Korean government declared publicly for the first time in an official statement that it was developing nuclear weapons.[52]

The resulting scenario is a contest between the sole superpower, intent upon enforcing its will, and North Korea, which is reacting to various forms of US pressure, such as being branded a part of the “axis of evil” and being included in the list of seven countries designated as targets for nuclear pre-emption in the US “Nuclear Posture Review”. The US attack on Iraq has probably convinced North Korea that it can escape a pre-emptive attack only by resuming its nuclear weapons programme. The US inclination towards an aggressive response was held in check by the ground realities that led South Korea and Japan to urge Washington to seek a negotiated solution.

The role played by China in promoting a multilateral dialogue, involving the US and North Korea, as well as China and South Korea, has been acknowledged by Washington, especially in the light of China’s declaration that the Korean peninsula should become a nuclear-weapon-free zone.

Future Prospects

Though the US continues to threaten the use of force, the elements for a peaceful resolution of its differences with North Korea do exist. North Korea has declared its readiness to renounce its nuclear and missile programmes in return for a US guarantee of non-aggression, resumption of food and fuel aid and diplomatic recognition. The main differences revolve around priorities-whether guarantees and recognition should come first or renunciation of nuclear weapons. China is well-placed to play an indispensable role in resolving these differences. It could win the world’s acclaim by helping to turn the Korean peninsula into a nuclear weapon-free zone. A pre-emptive strike by the US would cause unacceptable destruction, and a nuclearized North Korea may in turn force Japan and South Korea to go nuclear.[53] One can only hope that China’s approach-one that has world-wide support-will prevail.

IMPACTS OF THE EVENTS OF 9/11

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rior to the events of 11 September 2001, events that made the US aware of the vulnerability of its mainland in a manner that led it to declare war on “terrorism”, the Bush administration had been following a unilateralist approach, based on America’s indisputable military supremacy. Washington had reneged on many multilateral accords of global significance, including the Kyoto Protocol on the Environment, the De-mining Accord and the establishment of an International Criminal Court. The very launching of the concept of BMD on 1 May 2001, without advance international consultations, was a blatant assertion of unilateralism.

The declaration of the “war against terror” after 11 September 2001 led President Bush to propose a “Coalition against Terror”; all countries were invited to join. This was a significant turn towards a multilateral approach, requiring a strengthening of the role of the UN. Within days of the 9/11 attack, the UN Security Council passed a resolution calling upon all countries to initiate action against terrorism, and requiring reports on the follow-up to this demand. The US approach, focused on jihadi groups-notably Al Qaeda-in essence identified “Islamic fundamentalism” as the principal threat to the “civilized world”. President Bush received overwhelming domestic support for his interventionist approach and issued a virtual “licence to kill” to the US intelligence agencies in all parts of the world.

The targeting of Al Qaeda and the Taliban in Afghanistan and the ruthless action taken against them encouraged Israel and India to intensify their repression against Arabs in Palestine and the Muslim freedom-fighters in Kashmir respectively, both groups now conveniently branded “terrorists”. The Bush administration gave its full backing to the two governments, one run by

Jewish extremists in Israel and the other by Hindu extremists in India. A nexus developed between the Likud government headed by Ariel Sharon in Israel and the Hindu extremist BJP in India.

India, which had expected to be a beneficiary of the war against terror on account of the backing extended by Pakistan to the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, felt frustrated when Pakistan joined the “Coalition against Terror” and extended crucial support to the US against the Taliban regime. It successfully utilized terrorist incidents-notably the attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001-to bring pressure to bear on Pakistan. Indian forces were deployed in great numbers along the international border with Pakistan, as well as along the Line of Control in Kashmir as India accused Pakistan of complicity in “cross-border terrorism”. These concentrations and threats of “retaliation” were maintained for ten months, until October 2002, when India finally took steps to de-escalate, claiming that its purposes had been achieved.

The standing of India and Pakistan, *vis-à-vis* the sole superpower, presents a curious picture. President Musharraf of Pakistan has received high praise from the US, especially as his support has been critical to the success of US operations against Afghanistan. He has also taken a stand domestically against powerful religious groups and has implemented draconian measures to ban and control jihadi groups. However, the US-Pakistan relationship is considered tactical in nature, aimed at retaining support for the operations against the Taliban and Al Qaeda. India, on the other hand, is visualized as a strategic partner for the achievement of long-term US goals, goals that go beyond countering terrorism. These include the control of the sea-lanes in the Indian Ocean-for which Indian participation is deemed crucial-and the containment of China, the country seen as the only power capable of challenging US hegemony in the Asia-Pacific region.

A major outcome of the war against terror is that not only has the continued salience of BMD to US policy goals been underscored, but a doctrine of pre-emption has been announced, termed “the Bush Doctrine”. The Bush Doctrine evolved over the year 2002, starting with the President’s State of the Union address in January 2002 in which he lashed out against “the axis of evil”, comprising Iraq, Iran and North Korea. He declared, “States like these [Iran, Iraq and North Korea] and their terrorist allies constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. All nations should know America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation’s security . . . The US will not permit the world’s most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world’s most destructive weapons.”[54]

The number of states included in the “axis of evil” was subsequently increased with the inclusion of three more Muslim states: Syria, Libya and the Sudan. The Bush doctrine was specifically spelled out in the President’s address to US cadets at West Point on 1 June 2002: not only would the United States impose pre-emptive, unilateral military force when and where it chose, it would also punish those who engaged in terror and aggression; it would work to improve a universal moral clarity between good and evil. “If we wait for threats to materialize, we will have waited too long. As such, America will take pre-emptive action when necessary”. Bush went on to say that the US “must uncover terrorist cells in 60 or more countries ... we must take the battle to the enemy, disrupt his plans, and confront the worst threats before they emerge.” Cold War deterrence, based on overwhelming retaliation against potential aggressors, means nothing against shadowy terrorist networks, with no nations and citizens to defend. Three objectives are implicit in the Bush doctrine:

- i. Removal of governments repugnant to the US.
- ii. Pre-emptive action against such governments, terrorists and the WMD programmes of “rogue” regimes.

iii. The right of the US to initiate unilateral action when allies are not supportive of its policies.[55]

On 7 June 2002, Bush directed his national security strategy aides to make the doctrine of pre-emptive action against state and terrorists groups trying to develop WMD the foundation of a new national security strategy. According to Condoleezza Rice, National Security Adviser in the Bush government, this means early action, either singly by the US, or jointly with Russia and other powers, to forestall “certain destructive acts against you by an enemy”. There are times, she said, “When you can’t wait to be attacked to respond”. With pre-emption as the national security policy, the US is now free to attack any country, any time and anywhere as part of the new pre-emptive doctrine. In dealing with the “axis of evil”, the Bush doctrine signifies that there is no need for consultations with allies; it rationalizes the resort to military aggression by the theory of pre-emption against a perceived threat.

The Bush administration’s new security policy, with the right of pre-emptive attacks as its centrepiece, runs counter to Article 5 of the UN Charter which provides that the right to act in self-defence relates to an actual armed attack, not to an attack that is “likely to occur”. It constitutes a dangerous precedent, giving the right to powerful international players to take action against weaker nations on allegations of harbouring terrorists. India and Israel are already taking advantage of this precedent in their repressive policies in Kashmir and Palestine. Indeed, Indian Deputy Prime Minister, L. K. Advani, has already voiced the suggestion that India and Pakistan should have a “final” war to resolve their conflicts. India has also claimed the right to follow the doctrine of pre-emption.

The political dimensions of the Bush doctrine became clear after the release of the US National Security Strategy Paper (NSSP) in September 2002. According to the NSSP, the US will actively intervene and use its resources to shape the political structures within states so that they conform to a US-centric concept of democracy and openness. In other words, the US now feels it has the power and the influence to shape the world, including the internal dynamics of states, extending to “respect for private property”. The US will use force to intervene on issues that it perceives as pertaining to democracy.[56]

The NSSP clearly identifies the Muslim world as the region where the US will support “moderate and modern governments to ensure there is no fertile ground for terrorists”. This carries the insinuation that Muslim states are fertile breeding grounds for terrorists and that, therefore, the US will shape the political structures within these states. The US doctrine also recognizes the importance of certain states and alliances: the NSSP acknowledges India’s potential to become one of the great democratic powers of the twenty-first century. The doctrine emphasizes the importance of a strong relationship with India. Apart from sharing political and economic values, the US and India share an interest in fighting terrorism and creating a strategically stable Asia.

The NSSP has an economic dimension as well. Apart from fostering a market-based economic system, the doctrine also calls for the use of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank for furthering US goals. Steps to be taken to prevent financial aid to terrorists include freezing of the assets of groups and states the US considers hostile. Thus, the IMF and the World Bank will have political agendas. With a campaign already in place against Muslim states, there is a need for these states to formulate viable options before the military dimension of pre-emption becomes more widespread.[57]

In December 2002, the US came out with another paper entitled “National Security to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction”, which further expands the parameters of pre-emption. The

NSSP, along with the Nuclear Posture Review, had already sought to legitimize not only military pre-emption but also the first use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear states. The latest paper seeks to confer on US military forces and appropriate civilian agencies the ways and means to defend the country against WMD-armed adversaries. This requires capabilities to detect and destroy WMD assets of any adversary, before the weapons are used.[58]

Though Iraq was the focus of US military preparations, Washington has also expressed its concern about Iran's nuclear facilities, following the news that Russia would assist Iran in building a nuclear power reactor. Two factors sustain US hostility towards Iran: the memory of the year-long siege of the US embassy in Tehran in 1979-80, following the Islamic Revolution; and Israel's animus towards Iran, based on the latter's support to the Hezbollah. Also, the seeming discontent among Iranian youth—who want a loosening of the ideological constraints imposed by the clergy—as well as of the reformist wave symbolized by President Khatami, who is keen to build bridges to the West, are not lost on the US. If the hawks in the US prevail, Iran may well be targeted after Iraq.

BMD Goals Retained

In the meantime, the immediacy of the need to prosecute the war against terrorism has not diluted the resolve of the Bush administration to press on with the goal of developing missile defence during the President's current term. Even though the last anti-missile test in late December 2002 was a failure, making a total of three failures out of eight tests since 2001, it was announced that the target date of 2004 would be retained. As the *Washington Post* observed editorially, "The Bush administration's hasty drive to build a ground-based defense against long-range missiles seems to have more to do with the US political calendar than with any plausible defense scenario." The Bush team is clearly determined to create enough on-the-ground hardware by the next presidential election to make BMD irreversible.[59]

The *Post* pointed out that that, though an amount of over \$16 billion had been provided for the next two years, the Pentagon had not yet built key parts of the system, including a workable booster rocket or the satellite sensors needed to detect incoming missiles. The radar system exists only in prototype. With three failures out of eight by the current interceptor, there was little chance of successful interception before the end of the decade. Experts are questioning the expenditure in the absence of a tangible threat. The *Post* expressed the view that the funds could be better spent controlling the real danger posed by the nuclear, chemical and biological arsenals of the former Soviet Union, and loose fissile material elsewhere in the world.

Dawn, in its editorial under the heading "Back to Star Wars", pointed out that terrorists were unlikely to be in possession of nuclear-tipped ICBMs. Similarly, the "rogue" states could hardly take on the US. BMD appears to be no more than another manifestation of unilateralism. It will also mark a new phase of militarization of outer space. As the Canadian Foreign Minister has stated, "Weaponization of outer space will be immoral, illegal and a bad mistake." Furthermore, BMD will initiate a new arms race. China may well be forced to expand and accelerate its missile programme which, in turn, would affect Indian thinking on the issue. When the US emphasis is on disarming *everyone*, building missile defence "can hardly be morally justified", the paper concluded.[60]

CHALLENGES OF MANAGING BMD AND NUCLEAR RISK REDUCTION

The BMD initiative of the United States was not materially affected by the events of 9/11 which should, logically, have produced a shift in focus from the quest for total hegemony to addressing the causes of terrorism. Initially, some heed was paid to the need to eliminate the roots of terrorism, with President Bush declaring at the UN Development Summit at Monterey in March 2002 that, “We fight poverty because hope is an answer to terrorism.”[61] The subsequent US decision to continue testing its BMD system denotes a shift back to the development of offensive weapons, which compels the diversion of substantial resources towards missile defence technologies. This development at the international level is replicated at the regional level in Asia and involves the three nuclear powers in that continent: China, India and Pakistan. Consequently, efforts are necessary to limit the fallout from the situation that has evolved at both the international and the regional level.

On the global plane, the Bush administration’s adoption of a unilateralist approach has found its most concrete manifestation in BMD. President Bush and his close associates have not been deterred by the repeated failures of tests carried out to perfect the missile shield and Defence Secretary Rumsfeld has stated that the missile shield “need not be 100 per cent perfect” to have a deterrent effect on future adversaries. This has led commentators such as *New York Times* columnist, Thomas L. Friedland, to ask why it was necessary to spend \$100 billion on a missile shield of doubtful efficacy when rogue states like Iraq, North Korea and Iran were already deterred by existing US nuclear and missile capability.[62]

Though the Bush administration has been invoking the threat from rogue states such as Iraq, North Korea and Iran to justify its plans for BMD, reputable American analysts such as John Calabrese, who teaches US Foreign Policy at the American University in Washington, DC, have stated that the development of a missile defence capability is “chiefly intended to safeguard US interests *vis-à-vis* China.”[63] It is therefore understandable that China continues to harbour reservations about BMD, even though it is collaborating fully with the US in the war against terror. Since China’s present nuclear and missile capability provides minimal deterrence, it can be assumed that an expansion of this capability, in order to maintain its credibility against the escalating threat from the US, will be a security imperative for Beijing. Such an expansion, it may be added, is likely to be a slow process on account of the priority China gives to its economic development plans.

There are other, broader implications of the US BMD plans that are already causing concern among European and US experts. BMD, with its emphasis on the utilization of space for missile defence, effectively violates the provisions of the 1967 UN Outer Space Treaty that forbids the orbiting or stationing in space of weapons of mass destruction. The Treaty based on “the common interest of all mankind in the . . . use of space for peaceful purposes”, is the basis of numerous resolutions passed unanimously in the UN, of which the most recent, Resolution 55/32 of November 2000, titled, “Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space”, was adopted with 163 votes in favour, none against and three abstentions: the US, Israel and Micronesia. However, as Ambassador Jonathan Dean, who has represented the US in disarmament negotiations with the former Soviet Union, pointed out in his paper at the Arms Control Seminar in Beijing in October 2001, it was Donald Rumsfeld, the current Secretary of Defence in the Bush administration, who headed a commission that recommended a policy decision to weaponize space.[64]

As mentioned earlier, the US has been able to block the creation of a Working Group to take up the Chinese proposal for a treaty banning the weaponization of space; however, the matter may not end there. Mention has been made earlier of the rising concern among commercial users of outer space, most of them from the US and Europe, who earned revenues of \$3 trillion from 200 commercial satellites in 2000; those earnings may go up to \$6 trillion in 2005, when the number of commercial satellites is likely to increase to 500. Indeed, sentiment is growing within

the international community against the apparent indifference of the Bush administration to the damage being done to disarmament goals, even though one of the benefits claimed for BMD is that it would enable the US to reduce its nuclear stockpiles to a substantial extent.

The regional challenges in Asia are a direct outcome of the unilateralist approach of the US. China's immediate response has been somewhat muted, as it does not want to jeopardize its economic relationship with the US. As it is one of the countries identified for possible nuclear pre-emption under the Nuclear Posture Review, China wants to maintain a low profile in order to avoid provoking pre-emption, at least for the foreseeable future. However, China can be expected to maintain its principled opposition to BMD as a reflection of Washington's unilateralism and its hegemonic ambitions. China also opposed the US resolve to use military force in Iraq, favouring the disarming of Iraq through peaceful means. China was acutely conscious that such resort to force in Iraq would be followed by a paradigm shift in global political strategy, with the possibility of India and Israel resorting to "pre-emption" to deal decisively with the "insurgencies" in Kashmir and Palestine respectively.

India and Pakistan have adopted contrasting stands on the BMD initiative: the Indian Foreign Minister, Jaswant Singh, was the first major foreign leader to voice support for the US initiative. On 12 May 2001, General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief Executive of Pakistan, told journalists in the presence of the visiting Chinese Prime Minister, Zhu Rongji, that Pakistan was in agreement with China regarding its reservations about BMD.[65] Since then, Pakistan has also maintained a low profile on the global aspects of BMD, as it is confronted by a threat from the TMD policy that India has adopted with the active assistance of Israel and Russia and tacit encouragement from the US.

Missile Defence in South Asia

The basic feature of the nuclear and conventional military capabilities of India and Pakistan is the immense asymmetry in India's favour. This asymmetry is magnified by India's strategic depth. However, while the principal threat Pakistan faces is from India, Indian strategists perceive China as the main threat; in the Sino-Indian equation, the asymmetry is in China's favour.[66]

Since the end of the Cold War, a number of factors have worked to India's advantage and accentuated the asymmetry between India and Pakistan. These are outlined below.

- i. Following the end of the Cold War, the nature of relations between the US on the one hand, and India and Pakistan on the other, underwent a reversal. Pakistan, the US ally of the Cold War years, which had played a leading role in America's last proxy war with Moscow in Afghanistan as a frontline state, has been increasingly seen in an adversarial light. With the Islamic world now perceived as the successor to the threat earlier posed by communism, Pakistan's military strength and nuclear capability are seen as a part of that threat. President Bush (senior) invoked the Pressler Law in 1990, not only cutting off military and economic aid to Pakistan but also placing a ban on the delivery of military equipment ordered and paid for during the period of the US-Pakistan military alliance relationship.

- ii. With China making rapid strides economically and militarily, while retaining its communist ideology and taking a principled stand against US hegemony, Washington has adopted the goal of containing China. It sees in India a counterweight against both China's upsurge and Islamic resurgence. A strategic partnership with India is regarded as highly desirable.

iii. With a population of one billion and a flourishing economy, India is also seen as a large market for US exports and investment.

iv. The US-India nexus, developed as the US sought to fight “terrorism”, became a major plus point for India after 9/11.

Pakistan’s strategic location, its image as a moderate Islamic state and its assumption of a crucial role in the “Coalition against Terrorism” resulted in an improved equation with the US after the 9/11 attacks. However, there can be no doubt that its status as the only Islamic country with nuclear capability and the existence of powerful religious lobbies within the country make it appear an ally of questionable reliability. The US stance in the context of the nuclear stand-off between India and Pakistan has been to support India’s ambitions for nuclear status and to discourage similar aspirations in Pakistan. The fact is that Pakistan’s nuclear programme is India-specific and, if the Kashmir issue is resolved, Pakistan will most likely support the concept of a nuclear-free South Asia. The US is likely to facilitate a settlement of the Kashmir problem, probably by calling for the existing division along the Line of Control (LoC) to be recognized as an international border; even that would be deemed by Washington as a concession by India. Should such a settlement be reached, the US would doubtless bring pressure to bear on Pakistan to forego its nuclear weapons programme. Washington appears to have decided to accept India as a great power which it wishes to build as a counterweight to China and as a partner in the Indian Ocean region. This explains US support to India’s missile defence ambitions, even though, in the long term, a rivalry for hegemony could develop between the two.

India’s ambitious TMD programme is progressing rapidly on the basis of defence collaboration with Israel and Russia and can undermine the existing deterrence capabilities built up by Pakistan. This represents a challenge for Islamabad; with the variety of technologies becoming available to India, Pakistan’s deterrence may be eroded sufficiently to encourage pre-emption by India. The overall impact of India missile defence programme, its enhanced offensive capability and the operationalization of its draft nuclear doctrine, is a greatly increased prospect of instability in the region.[67]

An authoritative study of nuclear deterrence in South Asia by Dr Rodney W. Jones, a US expert, finds some reassuring elements in the postures adopted by India and Pakistan, both of which stress “minimum credible deterrence”. Indian planning pertains to threats perceived from China and Pakistan, while Pakistan views India as its only nuclear adversary. Jones believes that neither India nor Pakistan had deployed nuclear forces by 2001.[68] However, the risk of nuclear war remains significant and both countries keep adding to their nuclear and missile capabilities. Both have nuclear-capable aircraft (India has 513, as against Pakistan’s 93); the gap is not as wide in ballistic missile delivery systems, though Pakistan cannot achieve parity, owing to Indian access to technology from Russia and Israel.

The following table provides a summary of the main missile systems available.

Indian and Pakistani Nuclear-capable Missiles^[69]

India

Name	Range	Status
Prithvi 1 (Army)	150Km	Deployed
Prithvi 1 (Navy)	150 Km	Deployed

Prithvi 2 (Army)	250 km	On order
Prithvi 3 (Air Force)	350 km	R & D
Agni 1	1200-1500 km	Tested
Agni 2	2500 km	Prototype
Agni 3	3000-5000 km	R & D

(There are some other nuclear-capable models besides these.)

Pakistan

Name	Range	Status
Hataf 2	250-300 km	Under production
Hataf 3	600 km	Production
Hataf 4 (Shaheen)	750 km	Production
Shaheen 2	800-1200 km	R & D
Hataf 5 (Ghauri 1)	1350-1500 km	Testing
Hataf 6 (Ghauri 2)	2000-2500 km	Testing
Ghauri 3 (Abdali)	3000 km	R & D

Both countries have made progress in evolving nuclear doctrines and developing command and control systems; both are developing second-strike capability. India's efforts are specially focused on developing its own version of BMD, with the specific purpose of neutralizing Pakistan's nuclear deterrence. Indeed, its most significant acquisitions in the military field have tended to be in the field of early warning systems as well as capabilities to counter missile attacks. Negotiations have been held to acquire the Russian SAM 300 system that can play an anti-missile role. India is also planning to purchase the Arrow anti-missile system from Israel. As this has components with US technology, the US has enquired whether India had thought through the implications such plans may have in its relations with China and Pakistan.[70]

Given the nuclearization of South Asia and the possible resort to nuclear weapons—deliberately or by accident or through a misunderstanding—there is an urgent need for measures to stabilize the situation. Many steps have been taken, such as the proposal for a no-war pact. Pakistan has called for a missile-free regime in South Asia, to be reached through a mutual ban on missile testing. The early initiation of dialogue with active international facilitation has also been urged by Pakistan. Some unilateral measures have been taken to reduce risks and nuclear doctrines and command and control systems have been adopted. Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's April 2003 offer for resumption of a dialogue, which Pakistan has been pressing for, was warmly welcomed by Prime Minister Jamali of Pakistan. Though some preliminary steps towards restoring normalcy in bilateral relations have been taken, an impasse has been reached as India places almost impossible conditions—such as a complete end to “cross-border terrorism”—on the resumption of the dialogue process. There has to be recognition that both sides need to concede some genuine demands made by the other. The most immediate requirement is the restoration of an element of trust and in this the international community can play a role.[71] South Asia, it is generally recognized, is the one region in the world where a nuclear holocaust remains a dreadful possibility. Therefore, the imperatives of both nuclear risk reduction and regional stability require that the dialogue already initiated at the expert level is resumed and that it is encouraged by the major powers as well as by international organizations.

CONCLUSION

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the world is witnessing tendencies that are causing serious concern among thinking individuals in the affluent West and worries among the increasingly marginalized developing countries. BMD reflects US intentions of building an international system based on absolute hegemony. The conservative elements President Bush represents want to establish US global dominance on the basis of the country's technological and military superiority; BMD is part of a system that seeks total hegemony and aims at preventing the emergence of any rival. By postulating a threat from "rogue states", to which the menace of terrorism has been added after 9/11, the US is creating an order on the basis of the Bush Doctrine that caters to its perceived interests, thereby neglecting the urgent concerns of the rest of the world.

Prominent British academic, Will Hutton, in his analysis of the impact of forces of conservatism in the US, points out that the rise of these forces had begun in the last quarter of twentieth century. They have gained a dominant position since the terrorist attacks of 9/11. These forces, characterized by high tolerance for income inequalities and positing a major role for religious fundamentalism, claim that the US, with its exceptional civilization, is within its rights in acting unilaterally. BMD is the expression of US unilateralism in the sphere of security.[72]

Dr Armand Clesse, Director, Luxembourg Institute for European and International Studies, stated in Islamabad on 14 January 2003 that US policies under the Bush Doctrine sought a world-order characterized by a complete disregard for political liberties and humanitarian considerations. Washington even envisages the use of nuclear weapons as an option in view of the perceived threat of WMD in "rogue" states. The military operations planned against Iraq, despite lack of evidence from UN inspectors that it possessed WMD, were meant to demonstrate US strength, its ability to achieve total hegemony and prevent the emergence of any rival. The US leadership did not seem sufficiently aware of the damage it was doing to political liberties enshrined in its Constitution. It also appeared to be indifferent to the growing distress and deprivation among the poorer countries in Africa and Asia. Despite its economic pre-eminence, Bush and his team perceive Europe as inward-looking and therefore unlikely to be a strategic competitor or to challenge the US drive for hegemony. However, this assessment of Europe's attitude was proved wrong as the US proceeded to implement its doctrine of pre-emption.

Indeed, the sole superpower, that had played a positive role in the world following the Second World War, came under pressure to change its attitude from those very same European countries to whose security the US had committed itself. As the crisis over Iraq developed, Europe assumed a primary role in taking a principled stand against the doctrine of pre-emptive strikes against potential terrorist threats.

France, a permanent member of the UN Security Council, and Germany which was elected to a two-year term in 2003, took a strong stand on the need to obtain the Security Council's mandate before any military intervention against Iraq. They insisted on a continuing role for the UN weapons inspectors. France also failed to see any link between Iraq and Al Qaeda. Though France had its own interests in the region, it gave primacy to the need to uphold the principles of international law and the sanctity of the United Nations. Germany took a similar stand, as did Belgium when the matter was considered by the EU. Britain alone among European members of the Security Council supported the US stand. Some of the newly admitted members of the EU from Eastern Europe also found it expedient to back the US.

Even though the US sought to minimize the political impact of the position taken by France and Germany as representing “old Europe”, deriving comfort from the support of new members from East Europe, the fact remains that over 75 per cent of public opinion in Europe as a whole remained opposed to pre-emptive US action in Iraq.[73] Large-scale demonstrations against the war were held even in those countries whose governments backed the US, such as Britain, Spain and Italy. After active opposition by France, Germany and Russia failed to prevent US pre-emption, the governments of those countries continued efforts to restore the relevance of the Security Council.

The pressure for self-correction by the US towards its traditional role could be helped by major Asian powers, such as China and South Asia, which account for nearly 45 per cent of the world’s population. If India and Pakistan could resolve their differences, together with China they could become a potent factor in promoting a just and humane international order. However, the likelihood of China and South Asia uniting to emerge as a force in favour of a benign international role by the US is a distant prospect.

The real problems facing the world are poverty, hunger and disease. Before the US-led attack on Iraq, half-a-million Iraqi children had died as a result of sanctions imposed since 1990. The military attack has brought further devastation. Ironically, President Bush displayed traditional compassion during his visit to Africa, a continent sinking under the combined onslaught of poverty and AIDS. In South Asia, 30 to 40 per cent of the population live below the poverty line. These are the problems that cry out for the world’s attention. Even terrorism has to be seen as a symptom, the disease being political and economic injustice. These are the key international issues that need to be addressed but have, unfortunately, been pushed into the background by the Bush doctrine.[74]

EPILOGUE

The neo-conservatives around President Bush, who inspired the unilateralism behind BMD, succeeded in converting the tectonic upheaval of 9/11 into an opportunity which led the government to adopt the doctrine of pre-emption. This doctrine marks a radical departure from the Charter of the UN that legitimizes the use of force only in self-defence against an armed attack. The doctrine of pre-emption has created deep concern in Europe and other countries, as it provides a precedent for other powerful states to attack their weaker neighbours.

The US took the decision to wage war on Iraq shortly after its attack on Afghanistan, where, allegedly, the planning for the terrorist attack of 9/11 had been carried out. While justification for a war on Iraq was sought on the basis of the alleged possession of WMD by Saddam’s regime, the US decision to go to war to bring about regime change had already been taken. The US and the UK were in reality not concerned with finding banned WMD, the threat of which, according to Hans Blix, the chief UN weapons inspector, could have been contained through UN inspections.[75]

Three months after the invasion and occupation of Iraq by a “coalition of the willing” (labelled by many as a “coalition of the coerced”) led by the US and the UK, a great deal of controversy has arisen regarding the evidence that Saddam Hussein possessed WMD. The case against Iraq was built on the basis of unconvincing evidence and investigations are being demanded in the legislatures of both countries.

It is becoming increasingly clear that the real purpose of the war on Iraq was geo-strategic and geopolitical. As the eminent Palestinian scholar, Edward Said, wrote, “The American programme for the Arab world is the same as Israel’s. Along with Syria, Iraq theoretically

represents the only serious long-term military threat to Israel and, therefore, had to be put out of commission for decades.”[76]

Though President Bush announced in May 2003 that major military operations in Iraq were over, US and British forces have been under attack in a manner that suggests that significant elements of the Iraqi population remain opposed to foreign occupation. The continuing toll on American lives may compel the US to seek a UN resolution if international peacekeepers are to be involved; without the cover of the UN or other multilateral organizations, any foreign forces entering Iraq would be seen as serving US occupation forces. The prevailing instability and the manifest opposition to the occupying forces in Iraq may compel a rethink by Washington’s neo-conservatives, who have been hinting at intervention in Syria and even in Iran.

The doctrine of pre-emption not only violates the UN Charter and international law, it also tends to encourage other hegemonic powers to resort to it. As a matter of fact, India did seize upon the attack on Iraq to declare that it had better justification to launch a pre-emptive attack on Pakistan to defend itself against “cross-border terrorism”. [77] US Secretary of State, Colin Powell, responded promptly, rejecting any parallel between Iraq and Kashmir. [78] Prominent Indian columnist, Praful Bidwai, noted that the BJP appears to be fascinated by Zionism. “It sees Hindus and Jews (plus Christians) forming a strategic alliance against Islam and Confucianism.” [79]

Even as the US under Bush seeks to establish global hegemony through BMD and pre-emption, powerful forces are emerging to counter the new imperium. France and Germany in Europe, and Russia and China are opposed to it. Even North Korea has focussed on its limitations. Speaking at a summit meeting of the Non-Aligned Movement in February 2003, Malaysia’s Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohammad, called the war on Iraq not a war on terrorism but a war to dominate the world. [80] He subsequently called on Muslims to stand up for their rights. The blatant tampering with truth to justify the war on Iraq has already caused an outrage; that, in turn, may cause international opinion to rise up against the new imperialism.

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