

DIRECTOR, UNITED SERVICE INSTITUTION OF INDIA AT THE WORKSHOP ON "CHINA AND INDIA
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I must thank Paul, Lora, the Department of International Relations of Tsinghua University and the organisers for inviting me to this workshop on "China and India Nuclear Doctrine and Dynamics". It is also a pleasure to be a co-panelist with Maj Gen PAN.

I will begin my presentation by a statement made by the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee in the Parliament on 27 May 1988. He said, "India is a nuclear weapon state.....It is not a conferment that we seek; nor is it a status for others to grant..... It is India's due, the right of one sixth of humankind. Our strengthened capability adds to our sense of responsibility; the responsibility and obligation of power".

While considering India and China's nuclear doctrine and dynamics it is imperative that we look at the historical dynamics as also the geopolitical realities that existed from the time our countries became independent, because doctrines are not developed in a void.

India's nuclear ambitions and policies have been consistent since its independence. Right from 1948 when the Atomic Energy Commission was created, our leaders rightly believed that nuclear technology would help alleviate the country's energy needs, sustain its economic development and also, if and when needed, provide a deterrence and enable her to stake a claim to more influence in the global order. I would like to flag a few dates so as to put India's indigenous nuclear programme in its correct perspective :-

- The first light water research reactor in Asia was built in 1956 in India. The Heavy Water reactor was built in 1960. By 1962 we had produced our own Heavy Water and in 1965 separated Plutonium for the first time. We carried out our nuclear test in 1974.

- Now let me cover the strategic environment surrounding India during this period. China's actions in Tibet; the USA - Pakistan Mutual Defence Assistance Pact and Pakistan's dalliance with CENTO and SEATO; the 1962 Sino-Indian War followed by China's nuclear tests of October 1964 convinced the Indian leadership for the need to have our own nuclear deterrent. The Indo-Pak War of 1965 and the perceived possibility of a second front being opened by China only helped accentuate this resolve. The US tilt towards Pakistan in the 1971 Indo-Pak War, the deepening China - Pakistan nexus, the US - China rapprochement and the Pakistani desire since 1972 to have a nuclear weapon and its proliferation activities helped merge the anti and pro nuclear lobbies into somewhat agreeing on the nuclear weapons issue. India's foregoing nuclear weapons would neither have stopped Pakistan acquiring it nor China capping its programme.

At this stage I would also like to remind this distinguished gathering that when China tested its nuclear device in October 1964, the Partial Test Ban Treaty 1963 which banned atmosphere testing war in vogue and despite this China continued such testing till 1980. Further, when China tested in 1964 it was not even a member of the UN what to talk of its being a member of the P-5 ! I would also like to draw attention to the fact that in October 1964 China expected other countries to become nuclear powers because it wanted others to join it and support its stand. Let me just read out a part of the Chinese Government Statement issued on 16 October 1964, the day China exploded its first atomic bomb :-

"(China) proposes to the **governments of the world that a Summit Conference** of all the countries of the world be convened and that as the first step, the Summit conference conclude an agreement to the effect that the nuclear powers and **those countries which may soon become nuclear powers** undertake not to use nuclear weapons either against non-nuclear countries and nuclear free zones or against each other" (Emphasis added).

I would like to highlight the following aspects drawn from the statement issued by the Chinese Government :-

- (i) There is no such terms as de jure or de facto nuclear weapon state. I suppose, you explode an atomic bomb and presto you are a nuclear weapon State..... period !
- (ii) It proposed a Summit conference of the governments of the World - note, there is no mention of Security Council, P-5 or even the UN.
- (iii) It talks of countries which may soon become nuclear powers - so it was not only aware but also sure that others would follow suit. The next one to do so was India - so why does China create all this fuss about India's nuclear weapons specially when the nuclear tests by India did not flout any international conventions as India was not a signatory to the NPT and CTBT.

I will now do a fast forward and come to the present day and flag some issues.

The first one pertains to Disarmament. There is a paradox - all nuclear weapon States while having nuclear weapons also believe in nuclear disarmament. But here too my understanding is that there is a difference in the Indian and Chinese views. While India believes in a global, verifiable and non - discriminatory nuclear disarmament, the Chinese

position linked nuclear disarmament to be carried out in conjunction with conventional disarmament as mentioned in the proposal put forward by the Chinese delegation at the Second Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Disarmament. This proposal is too idealistic and unrealistic – do we really believe that conventional disarmament will go hand in hand with nuclear disarmament ? So, since we cannot achieve one, we should forget about the other is what is implied by the Chinese statement.

In the absence of global nuclear disarmament, India’s strategic interests require effective, credible nuclear deterrence and adequate retaliatory capability should deterrence fail. India’s doctrine of credible minimum nuclear deterrence is not about numbers. It is a dynamic concept – it is not evolving in a void – it will be related to the strategic environment, technological imperatives and the needs of national security. And it will be based on a nuclear triad – ground, air and submarine based nuclear weapons, have no doubts about this.

After touching on nuclear disarmament and credible nuclear deterrence, let me just say a word about “No first Use (NFU)”. India’s position is absolutely clear but lately there were some articles in the media suggesting a change in China’s NFU policy. May be China now would like to have the same policy as the other nuclear weapon States.

A word on nuclear arms race. The simple answer is, NO, India will not get into an arms race. After having acquired nuclear weapons, we have steadfastly pursued our economic reforms and accelerated our globalisation efforts in all fields. Nuclear Weaponisation will not be allowed to mess our economic, political or strategic aims – but the bottom line is that we will have a credible minimum nuclear deterrence. While China also says that it will not get into a nuclear arms race, to my mind, it is clear that the Chinese nuclear arsenal will grow. My distinguished co-panelist, Maj Gen PAN, had written in 2009 “China has no other alternative than to quicken the pace and scope of its modernisation drive, including increasing the number of its war heads and building more mobile inter-continental range ballistic Missiles”. So my worry and my question to Gen PAN is, what do you do with the missiles and nuclear weapons which are being replaced by more modern ones ? I have not read of any decommissioning, so do I believe that the shorter range, older nuclear weapons are being redeployed towards the Sino-Indian border possibly in Tibet or who knows in POK ?

Another interesting concept which needs clarification from the Chinese experts is about nuclear stability and nuclear balance because these term are used in an inter-changeable manner possibly because in the Chinese language only one word is used to convey two different strands of thought. May be this aspect could be elaborated by the Chinese discussant.

Linked to the aspect of nuclear stability is to know, how China proposes to maintain nuclear stability and nuclear balance with USA and what will its impact be on nuclear stability / balance between China and India ? Actually, the basic question that we need to address is whether there can be nuclear stability or balance without the issue being discussed multi-laterally between USA, Russia, China and India – this is something which we should discuss. Another issue which could be clarified by Gen PAN pertains to his writing that China should continue to maintain a defensive nuclear posture etc and that the US has to make sure that further developments in its nuclear posture do not threaten the capability of Beijing’s small nuclear retaliatory force. So you are putting the onus on USA not to threaten / weaken Chinese nuclear retaliation. I don’t know what the American response to your proposal was but what will the Chinese response be if I was to put the same question to you with respect to India’s nuclear retaliation capacity? Since I am running out of time, I would like China and India to spell out their vision on how to deal with the issue of nuclear red lines if any between our countries; nuclear terrorism; also about nuclear weapons in failing States or in the hands of non-state actors; how to jointly deal with nuclear proliferation and also illegal nuclear commerce of the variety carried out by the AQ Khan network. And how do we address the question of proxy nuclear States? Earlier, we used to talk of “nuclear umbrellas” being provided to non-nuclear States and the world was used to it. But that concept has been overtaken by a perception that Pakistani and North Korean nuclear programmes are there because of the support given by China. What if this model of proxies is then carried forward by other States? What if some States now create a nuclear armed terrorist organisation as its proxy ? No, this question is not in the realm of fiction any more and needs to be addressed. And before I conclude I would like to say something about conventional military capabilities – I think in India we will maintain highly effective conventional capabilities which may include precision strikes with conventional missiles, robust BMD etc so as to raise the threshold of outbreak of conflict.

I would like to end by saying that a global, verifiable and non-discriminatory nuclear disarmament is a national security objective for India. India shall continue its efforts to achieve the goal of a nuclear weapon free world at any early date but till then we shall have a credible minimum nuclear deterrence capability.