

Nuclear Powers and Terrorism: Challenges for Indo-Pak Strategic Stability

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Abstract

The rapid expansion of nuclear weapons and related technology has posed serious threats to global peace. Ensuring the safety of nuclear assets has become a serious challenge for the global community. The increasing influence of non-state actors and terrorist groups worldwide has undermined the traditional security arrangements. Such is the case of Pakistan and India, two hostile neighbours with a history of conflicts and wars whose status as nuclear-weapons states (NWS) is the source of strategic stability in South Asia. This study focuses on the specific situation in Pakistan and India, examining their relationship, the terrorist threats they face, and their vulnerabilities to nuclear terrorism. According to many security analysts, it has been assumed that the Kargil War in 1999, the 2001-2002 military stand-off and the Mumbai attacks in 2008, have weakened the chances of strategic stability in South Asia. Both states face serious threats from terrorist groups which have been successful in creating mistrust between them. The increasing influence of terrorist organizations in the South Asian region can lead to a serious situation; in the case of Pakistan and India, it could provoke conflicts which could escalate into nuclear war. Mutual trust and regional cooperation could be in the interests of both states as well as for the region.

Keyword: Terrorism, Non-state Actors, Hostile Neighbours, Strategic Stability, Nuclear War.

Introduction

India and Pakistan are nuclear weapon states and their nuclear weapons have become an important part of diplomacy between them. Nuclear deterrence has played significant role in maintaining “ugly

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stability”¹ between India and Pakistan. While neither aims at war, non-state actors can manipulate the situation, especially, through the use of terrorist activities. Any major terrorist action in India could inadvertently start warfare against Pakistan. Terrorist attacks on Indian Parliament on December 13, 2001 resulted in military standoff in 2001-2002 and later on Mumbai attacks in November 2008 present a glimpse of a worst-case scenario. These incidents have undermined the chances for strategic stability in South Asia. There is no doubt that the terrorist organisations have become a very serious threat, not only in the world but also in South Asia. They have the potential to provoke India and Pakistan into a war-like situation. Pakistan is taking serious measures to fight terrorism and in building good relations with India. At this stage, India must change its policy of consistently shifting blame to Pakistan. There is also a need to counter the nuclear terrorism threat and India must behave sensibly if any terrorist incident like Mumbai occurs on its territory. Mutual trust and cooperation would be constructive in strengthening relations.

There is no doubt that terrorism has become a serious challenge for international peace and development. War fighting strategies have been developed during the last a few decades, and rapidly increasing insurgencies of terrorist groups have undermined traditional security arrangements between states. Now states are facing both traditional and non-traditional security threats². Terrorism has become one of the most serious non-traditional security threats for global peace. South Asia has suffered very serious challenges in this regard. Terrorism is present in almost every South Asian state in various forms and degrees. Terrorists are involved in brutal activities in the region, including targeted killing, suicide bombings, drug trafficking, kidnapping, violence, and assassinations of key personalities in the region.

¹Term “Ugly Stability” in South Asia was introduced by Ashly Tellis in Ashley J. Tellis, *Stability In South Asia*, Santa Monica, Rand Documented Briefing, 1997, viii.

²Peter Hough has comprehensively discussed non-traditional security threats in his book, *Understanding Global Security* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008). Susan L. Craig in his book *Chinese Perceptions of Traditional and Nontraditional Security Threats*, Carlisle, USA: Strategic Studies Institute, 2007 has mentioned following nontraditional security threats: Terrorism, Pollution, Proliferation, Energy Insecurity, Drug Trafficking, and Infectious Disease.

In addition, terrorist organisations have taken the advantage of already-existing tensions and rivalry between Pakistan and India. It is believed that there is existence of militant groups in Pakistan, Roul argues, “in India, there are more than 100 separatist and extremist armed groups”³ and India has already banned 35 groups for unlawful activities.⁴ Some have brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war in 2001-2002. India has repeatedly accused Pakistani religious organizations like Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM), and Harakatul-Mujahadeen (HuM) of supporting local terrorist groups in India.⁵ Consequently, Pakistan also claims that India is supporting Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militants groups in Pakistan, such as Baloch militants. Pakistan’s Defence Minister, Khawaja Asif is also quoted in the newspapers to have accused India for helping terrorist groups in Pakistan.⁶ Similarly, the Indian Defence Minister, Manohar Parrikar did not conceal his state’s policy and categorically stated that India “will use terrorism to counter terrorism from other countries”⁷ has increased the tension between two states.

Terrorist groups are adopting advance technologies to accomplish their political objectives. In this regard, one aspect that has received inadequate attention is the relationship between terrorism and the regional politics of nuclear weapons. Since the 9/11, the discussion about nuclear terrorism has been raised to the front page of the international agenda, while terrorist activities have considerably increased. The ruthlessness of these attacks shows the potential for terrorists’ targeting of nuclear facilities, nuclear material and radioactive sources

³Amimesh Roul, “100 More Terrorist Groups Banned in India: What are India’s Counterterrorism Priorities?,” *Terrorism Monitor*, volume VIII, issue 22 (June 5, 2010): 6

⁴Ministry of Home Affairs India Report on March 30, 2015.

⁵Jayshree Bajoria, “Pakistan’s New Generation of Terrorists,” Council on Foreign Relations, December 9, 2011.

⁶“India helping terrorists in Pakistan: Khawaja Asif,” *Dawn*, January 13, 2015, <http://www.dawn.com/news/1156571>

⁷Rezaul H Laskar, “Pak Reacts to Parrikar’s Remarks, Alleges India Involved in Terror,” *Hindustan Times*, May 24, 2015, <http://www.hindustantimes.com/india-news/pak-reacts-strongly-to-parrikar-remarks-alleges-india-involved-in-terror/article1-1350623.aspx>,

worldwide.⁸ Nuclear-weapons states (NWS) consider nuclear capacity a guarantor to their national security. However, the possible possession of these weapons by terrorists groups endangers international security. This paper first examines the dual threats posed by the presence of nuclear weapons and the presence of terrorist groups in India and Pakistan. It also discusses the potential for nuclear or radiological terrorism in the region, concluding with possible implications and proposed policy recommendations for Indo-Pakistani strategic stability.

Due to the increase in terrorist activities, the South Asian region is dealing with a crucial security threat.⁹ There are several factors which are further inflaming the circumstances, which revolves around political and social perpetration by tyrannical governments and rebel groups, and “socio-economic factors like poverty, unequal job opportunities, hunger, backwardness and unemployment.”¹⁰ In essence, the prevalence of terrorism and extremism in South Asia can be linked to “the challenges arising out of defective national policies.”¹¹

South Asia has faced various challenges throughout its history. Traditional rivalry between Pakistan and India has displayed negative signs for regional development. Because of these regional disputes, non-state actors/terrorists have become very influential in the region, who can even challenge the writ of the states. To accomplish their political objectives, these terrorists can even provoke conflict between two nuclear powers.

South Asia was overtly nuclearised in May 1998 and this raised the threat of use of nuclear weapon in case deterrence failed. With the existence of hostilities in the region, a conventional war has the potential to escalate into nuclear war. It is not only the ideological differences, but also differences in ethnicity, religion, culture, language. Both India and Pakistan understand the brutality of nuclear weapons and after effects of

⁸Press Release of United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency, November 1, 2001, <http://www.iwar.org.uk/cyberterror/resources/nuke/11-05-01.htm>

⁹Sadia Nasir, “Rise of Extremism in South Asia,” *IPRI*, Paper 7, October 2004, <http://ipripak.org/papers/riseofextremism.shtml>

¹⁰“Terrorism: The South Asian Experience,” *Spotlight on Regional Affairs*, Islamabad, vol. XVIII, no. 7-8 (July-August 1999): 27.

¹¹*Ibid.*

nuclear war. Although nuclear deterrence has maintained the strategic stability in the region since 1980s, the presence of nuclear weapons in the region has still multiplied the threats to the regional peace.

An important question arises whether the strategic stability would be undermined by terrorist groups? Terrorist groups have penetrated the socio-political system, keeping in view the multiple reasons which are root causes of terrorism in the region. Poverty, corruption, bad governance, weak rule of law, injustice, unemployment, unequal distribution of resources and intra-state conflicts are few of the major causes of terrorism. Understanding the sensitive relations of both states, terrorists have been successful on many occasions in creating misperceptions between Pakistan and India. In Malik's (2004) view, "non-state or anti-state actors have twice brought nuclear-armed Pakistan and India to the brink of war since September 11, which could have escalated to the nuclear level."¹² For instance on December 13, 2001, a terrorist attack on Indian Parliament brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war. "An estimated 800,000 troops, including its two strike corps, deployed on India's western borders, its Air Force units and satellite airfields were activated and the fleet moved into the northern Arabian Sea to join the western fleet for blockading Pakistan if required."¹³

It was the time when Pakistan was already facing global pressure because of September 11, 2001 incident.¹⁴ To respond to India, Pakistan undertook large-scale counter deployments of its troops, leading to an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation along the border, which carried the

¹²Mohan Malik, "The Stability of Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: The Clash between State and Anti-state Actors," in Satu Limaye, Mohan Malik and Robert Wirsing, eds., *Religious Radicalism in South Asia* (Honolulu: Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies, 2004): 322.

¹³P.R. Chari, "Nuclear Crisis, Escalation Control, and Deterrence in South Asia," *The Henry L. Stimson Center*, August 2003, 20.

¹⁴Following the 9/11 attacks, the Pakistani Army deployed its 11 and 12 Corps to the Afghan border to support the American hunt for fleeing al-Qaeda leaders and foot soldiers. Now the Pakistani military, which is roughly half the size of India's, was simultaneously facing a severe Indian threat along its western border. Outnumbered and poorly positioned to defend against an Indian attack, Pakistan's military planners quickly redeployed the army's 11 and 12 Corps to the Indian border.

danger of conflict escalating into nuclear war, not by design, but by misperception, accident, or miscalculation.”¹⁵ India was thinking to wage a war on a limited scale without intensifying nuclear danger. It was prepared with various options and alternative war scenarios, which included “an attack across the Cholistan desert to split Pakistan into two. cross-border raids by helicopter-borne special forces to destroy terrorist camps, punitive attacks upon Pakistan’s regular forces, and letting Pakistan suffer a financial crunch due to its counter-deployment.”¹⁶ During the crisis situation, Pakistan had alerted all forces and was ready to include the nuclear option. On December 30, 2002, after the border crisis standoff, former President Pervez Musharraf disclosed that he “would have unleashed an ‘unconventional war’ on India, had a single Indian soldier crossed the border. In response, Indian Defence Minister George Fernandes stated that “there will be no Pakistan left’ if India used its nuclear weapons.”¹⁷ It was first time in the history of South Asia when two “nuclear armed neighbours” were at brink of nuclear war. After receiving serious global pressure and realizing that Pakistan maintains unbreakable defensive fence, India decided to pull out its forces. This episode had serious implications for the future of Pakistan-India relations. But both states struggled toward peace process through bilateral talks and discussions.

The November 2008 Mumbai terrorist attacks was another terrible incident in the history of India, which disrupted the peace process between Pakistan and India. On November 26, 2008, ten terrorists with grenades and machine guns launched a series of attacks on major commercial and financial places in Mumbai. It took three days for Indian security forces to defeat the terrorists, nine of whom were killed. At least 172 people were killed in this terrorist attack which has also been referred to as “India’s 9/11.”¹⁸ It was again a serious attempt by terrorists to provoke India to engage in war with its nuclear neighbours. Terrorists were completely aware of the impact of this assault. They

¹⁵Chari, “Nuclear Crisis, Escalation Control, and Deterrence in South Asia,” 20.

¹⁶Ibid., 21.

¹⁷P. R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema and Stephen P. Cohen, *Four Crises and a Peace Process: American Engagement in South Asia* (Washington DC: Brookings Institute Press, 2009), 195.

¹⁸Angel Rabasa et al., “The Lessons of Mumbai,” *RAND Corporation*, 2009, 1.

used common tactics and normal weapons, killing people at different commercial points without having fear of their own deaths. According to Angel Rabasa, “by most measures, it was not the first significant terrorist attack in India. Nevertheless, some aspects of this attack were significant, namely, its audacious and ambitious scope, the complexity of the operation, and the diversity of its targets.”¹⁹

India blamed Pakistan for Mumbai attacks but Pakistan strongly condemned the terrorist attack. Both states were aware of the great risks implicit in escalation. Indian decision-making elites were critically considering some serious steps, including surgical strikes into Pakistan’s territory. It was obvious to India that any type of military action against Pakistan could escalate into full-scale war. “In the midst of this turmoil, however, the two nations continued to cooperate in exchanging information on nuclear facilities and refrained from direct military confrontation. While in the short-term it appeared the governments of India and Pakistan have managed the fallout from the Mumbai attacks, the long-term implications of the incident for both countries’ nuclear and security strategies remain unclear.”²⁰

The aftermath of the November 2008 Mumbai attacks demonstrated restraint on the part of Indian and Pakistani leaders in the face of an international crisis with the potential to escalate into nuclear war. Both sides appeared to have learned from the 2001-2002 conflict, which was ignited by a similar terrorist attack but quickly escalated to the brink of war. Changes to their military strategies were clearly manifest in their reactions to the Mumbai attacks. These events suggest the threat of escalation into nuclear war actually prevented either side from declaring war. However, “the possibility of deterrence breakdown can never be completely dismissed.”²¹ Regional terrorists have the potential to destabilize the region and strategic stability between Pakistan and India.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Heather Williams, “Nuclear and Strategic Implications of the Mumbai Attacks: One Year Later,” *WMD Insights, Issues and Viewpoints in the International Media*. January 2010, Issue no 31, 21.

²¹Ibid.

However, Pakistan has reacted sensibly and avoided blame game after various terrorists' attacks on its territory, such as, attacks on its military installations, Peshawar school incident and many others in which thousands of people have been killed.

Nuclear Terrorism: Theoretical Possibilities

There are concerns and apprehensions among certain quarter about the consequence of a future terrorist attack if took the form of an attack on nuclear facilities. Nuclear terrorism refers to the various ways in which nuclear materials or resources might be used as a terrorist tactic. It is also argued, "Nuclear terrorism could take many forms, any one of which would be a disaster by any measure."²² It is vital to understand that each nuclear terrorism situation has a contradictory degree of probability and very diverse consequences²³ but some would be potentially more devastating than the others. These threats scenarios are equally applicable to all nuclear weapons states. Security analysts describe four scenarios of nuclear terrorism which are applicable on any nuclear power state. We can also assume a fifth scenario particularly in the case of Pakistan and India. Nuclear terrorism in various forms is discussed in the following paragraphs.

i. Buying or Stealing a Nuclear Weapon

The acquisition of a nuclear device by terrorist groups poses serious challenges to nuclear weapon states (NWS). These groups might be able to purchase nuclear materials from the black market. Vulnerabilities can be identified in all states possessing nuclear weapons that might lead to falling of nuclear weapons into the hands of terrorists,²⁴ but in case of India and Pakistan, this is least possible.

²²Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, "WMD Terrorism and Pakistan: Counterterrorism," *Defence Against Terrorism Review*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Fall 2008): 103-118.

²³Michael A. Levi, *On Nuclear Terrorism* (Harvard University Press, 2007),5.

²⁴Charles D. Ferguson and William C. Potter, *The Four Faces Nuclear Terrorism* (London: Routledge, 2005),55.

ii *Attack on Nuclear Power Plants and Nuclear Weapons Facilities*

In this case, terrorists aiming to accomplish their political objectives can strike a truck or light aircraft carrying high explosives near a critical part of the nuclear facility or attack the facility with small arms, artillery or missiles and occupying the facility.²⁵ It is a fact that Pakistan and India have increased their nuclear insulations during the last few years. India's current and proposed nuclear installations are higher than Pakistan. Therefore, it would be a worst case scenario for India than Pakistan.

iii *Radiological Dispersal Device (RDD)*

It is easy for a terrorist to construct and deploy a radiological dispersion weapon or "dirty bomb." It will create panic as radioactive contamination and lethal effect on health give rise to serious biological disorders. Low-level radioactive wastes, such as medical debris waste and some of the by-products of nuclear power generation are copious and comparatively unsecured. Conventional explosives could be scattered over an open area causing terror, diseases, and contamination that could cost billions of dollars to decontaminate. A more dangerous radiological weapon could be prepared using the fissile materials required for a highly enriched uranium (HEU) or plutonium nuclear weapon. However, acquiring HEU or plutonium would be more complicated than acquiring low-level radioactive wastes. Needless to say, the mere scattering of such extremely radioactive and lethal materials by conventional explosives would be fatal.

iv *Building a Nuclear Weapon*

One way for terrorists to obtain a nuclear weapon would be to start at the source to produce the required fissile material on their own

²⁵Alex Schmid and Robert Wesley, "Possible Causes and Motives on Nuclear and Radiological Terrorism," in Jeffrey Ivan Victoroff ed., *Tangled Roots: Social and Psychological Factors in the Genesis of Terrorism* (Amsterdam: IOS Press, 2006), 371.

and then use that material to build a nuclear device.²⁶ The most arduous part of the elaboration of a nuclear weapon is obtaining the fissile material required, arguably the most ambitious, most complicated, and least likely. Terrorist groups cannot make nuclear explosive material, which includes HEU and plutonium.²⁷ Natural uranium only consists of 0.725 per cent of uranium-235, which is too low of a concentration to sustain an explosive chain reaction. Nuclear bombs require much greater concentrations of uranium-235, usually 90 per cent, which is considered weapons-grade. Terrorists do not have the technical and industrial resources required to enrich their own uranium.²⁸

v. *Misperception between Two Nuclear-Weapons States as a Consequence of Terrorism*

It is a reality that terrorist groups have been successful, many times, in creating misperception between Pakistan and India. According to Potter (2008): “It is believable that non-state actors or terrorists could instigate nuclear violence by indirect means involving deception.”²⁹ There are many factors that can further intensify the bilateral relationships by exacerbating traditional enmity, ideological differences and territorial disputes. Terrorist groups can provoke the situation by their terrorist activities in the region. For example, “terrorists can provoke a nuclear war in South Asia by inflicting conventional violence in India or Pakistan in such manner as to suggest the possibility of state complicity.”³⁰

²⁶Robin M. Frost, *Nuclear Terrorism After 9/11*, (New York: Routledge, 2005), 41-42.

²⁷C. D. Ferguson, “Nuclear Terrorism Fundamentals,” in Magnus Ranstorp and Magnus Normak ed., *Unconventional Weapons and International Terrorism: Challenges and New Approaches*, (New York: Routledge, 2009), 124.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹William C. Potter, “Countering the Threat of Nuclear Terrorism,” in Jean du Preez ed., *Nuclear Challenges and Policy Options for the Next U.S. Administration*, James Martin Center for Nonproliferation Studies, Occasional Paper No. 14, December 2008, 31.

³⁰Ibid.

Nuclear Terrorism Risk Analysis

According to Basrur, “it has been considered that nuclear capable states, particularly, South Asian states are vulnerable to such threats owing to the wide distribution of nuclear and radiological materials and concurrent threats from numerous terrorist groups. Few studies have attempted to gauge the extent of the problem.”³¹ During the last two decades, numbers of nuclear installations, nuclear materials and particularly nuclear weapons have been increased. Although, India claims that it has managed “a high level of security and inherent safety features,”³² it is also a fact that India is rapidly developing its nuclear infrastructures in the country.

The level of vulnerability to nuclear and radiological terrorism will grow significantly if nuclear weapons inventories expand. The larger a nuclear force is, the greater will be its vulnerability to terrorist assault. Safeguarding nuclear arsenals is a major task for all NWS in general, and more specifically, for those with the largest number of weapons and material.³³ The Indian nuclear infrastructure is located across the country and, comprises a range of activities. They constitute fuel fabrication facilities, research reactors, power plants, plutonium reprocessing plants, spent fuel pools, breeder reactors, waste immobilization plants, waste storage areas, uranium or thorium mines and milling plants.

The critical examination of India and Pakistan national security strategies reveal, “neither India nor Pakistan would want a terrorist group to acquire nuclear capability of any kind. Hence, they have a common interest in cooperating against nuclear terrorist threats.”³⁴ Basrur and

³¹Rajesh Basrur and Friedrich Steinhäusler, “Nuclear and Radiological Terrorism Threats for India: Risk Potential and Countermeasures,” *Journal of Physical Security*, vol. 1, no. 1 (2004), 2.

³²“India helping terrorists in Pakistan: Khawaja Asif,” *Dawn*, January 13, 2015.

³³Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, “Nuclear Risk Preventive Approaches in Adversarial Indo-Pakistan Scenario,” *18th European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies, Lund, Sweden*, July 6-9, 2004, 4.

³⁴Rajesh M. Basrur and Hasan-Askari Rizvi, “Nuclear Terrorism and South Asia,” *Cooperative Monitoring Center Occasional Paper/25*, SAND 98-0505/25 (February 2003):13-14, <http://www.cmc.sandia.gov/cmc-papers/sand98-050525.pdf>,

Rizvi (2003), have recommended the following measures for bilateral cooperation:

1. Cooperation between the border security authorities of India and Pakistan in interdicting unauthorized movement of goods and people across their boundaries;
2. Monitoring the activities of transnational terrorist groups, exchanging information on these groups, and making joint efforts to disrupt their connections, transactions, and movement; and
3. A formal agreement on maintaining nuclear arsenals in a non-operational form to consolidate the tacit cooperation already in existence. This would not only strengthen strategic stability directly, but also help reduce the scope for terrorists to target nuclear weapons.³⁵

Nuclear terrorism has become a global threat. Global community is seriously working to counter this terrorist. Mutual cooperation and an effective strategy are required to counter terrorist groups who want to acquire nuclear materials or device for terrorist activity. There is also a need to strengthen bilateral cooperation, exchange of inter-state information. International Atomic Energy Agency has introduced various safety and security measures for the security of nuclear technology, installations and weapons. While Pakistan and India endorse these efforts, this practice should be continued for the interest of people.

Implications and Conclusion

Asymmetry in conventional forces has always provided a sense of inferiority to Pakistan's policy makers. Both states have tried to normalize their relations, but because of mistrust, they have not been able to reach a fruitful situation.³⁶ This trust deficit has always kept both states away from any peaceful negotiation. India does not trust Pakistan and blame it for any terrorist activity on its territory. Terrorist attacks in Mumbai are one of the prime examples in this regard. "Within hours the tragic events started to unfold, New Delhi began implicating Islamabad.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Umbreen Javaid, "Urgency for Inter-State Dialogue for Fighting Terrorism in South Asia," *Journal of Political Studies*, vol. 18, issue 1, (2011): 1-14.

It seems that the India and Pakistan peace process is suffering from a classic spoiler problem.”³⁷ Chances of war between these two neighbouring states remain very high. Since the independence, both states perceive each other as a serious threat and this perception has stopped them to come close toward peace.³⁸

During the last 15 years, terrorists have been successful in creating misperception between two NWS. These terrorist groups aided to suspension the bilateral dialogue and peace process between India and Pakistan. “Two main incidents of terrorism in India, led it to adopt a very aggressive attitude towards Pakistan, India fully exploited these incidents to blame Pakistan overtly of cross border terrorism and also of harbouring organizations inside Pakistan especially the ones working towards the liberation of Kashmir.”³⁹ These terrorist groups are the serious threat to the regional strategic stability. In future, any major terrorist activity in India could be very dangerous for regional peace and stability. The whole region would suffer the consequences of war between Pakistan and India, and terrorist groups will get more confidence and power through this deceptive tactic.

To avoid any kind of worst situation, efforts were made to established some countermeasures. “The traditional strategy used between states to prevent either the spread of nuclear weapons or their first use was that of deterrence. This concept, however, may fail in its applicability once it is extended to the domain of nuclear terrorism due to the mere fact that sub-state actors do not respond in the same way as a nation.”⁴⁰ Image and perception about adversary also play negative role in mutual relationships. Weaknesses always provide a chance to enemy to take benefit of them. Terrorist groups understand the sensitivity of the Pakistan-India relations. They have already taken the benefits of hostile relationships of both neighbours.

³⁷Rizwan Zeb, “Makers, Breakers and Spoilers in India-Pakistan Peace Process,” *Islamabad: Institute of Regional Studies*, vol. XXVIII, no.1 (Winter 2009-10):24.

³⁸Imran Sardar, “Conflict Transformation: A Paradigm Shift in Indo-Pakistan Conflict,” *Islamabad Institute of Regional Studies*, vol. XXIX, no.2 (Spring 2011): 4.

³⁹Umbreen Javaid, “Urgency for Inter-State Dialogue for Fighting Terrorism in South Asia.”

⁴⁰Sarah Bokhari, “The United States Dealings with Nuclear Terrorism: Cooperation from Prevention,” *Journal on Science and World Affairs*, vol. 2, no. 1 (2006):29-38.

Both states understand the destructive capabilities of nuclear weapons. Any type of military action could not be in the favour of any state. To avoid serious confrontation in future, both states have considered some options. They have participated in nuclear-threat reduction measures, have acceded to regional cooperative agreements containing disarmament components; and furthermore, they have actively participated in International Atomic Energy Agency nuclear safety and security training courses.⁴¹ Global community has introduced various nuclear safety and security conventions, treaties and resolutions. They have endorsed all the global efforts to secure the nuclear assets. According to UN Resolution 1540 and the Convention on Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials, both states are supposed to secure their nuclear materials.⁴² India and Pakistan have adopted sufficient measures to secure their nuclear assets. Nuclear weapons have become the guarantor of their sovereignties. “Their national sovereignty overwhelms nuclear security measures.”⁴³ Furthermore, both states have also signed bilateral agreement in terms of not attacking on nuclear facilities. Again on January 1, 2014, India and Pakistan exchanged lists of their nuclear facilities as part of an agreement that bans the long-time rivals from attacking each other’s nuclear installations.⁴⁴

In conclusion, terrorism is a common threat and as such needs to be addressed with the construction of a comprehensive counter-terrorism approach. There is a risk that any kind of conflict, limited war, or military strike will lead to nuclear war in South Asia. India should behave rationally before making any decision. Its aggressive policies would aggravate the regional peace. Pakistan has witnessed many major terrorist incidents on its territory but it has not reacted aggressively against any state. On other side, India has always linked terrorist incidents with Pakistan. Therefore, India should refocus on confidence building measures with a sincere approach. Track Two Diplomacy should be resumed. Terrorist groups do not want peace process between Pakistan and India. This reality needs to be understood, and the peace

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Ibid.

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴“India, Pakistan Exchange Nuclear Facilities List,”

<http://www.dawn.com/news/1077706/india-pakistan-exchange-nuclear-facilities-list>

Nuclear Powers and Terrorism

process should be guarded and should not come to a standstill at any cost. If possible, a third-party — a major power, should be involved in the peace process as a mediator. Finally, mutual assurances, transparency, monitoring cross-border flows, confidence building, nuclear security safety, assessing the scale of risk, must all be pursued as part of efforts to defusing tensions.

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