

NUCLEAR WEAPONS & INDIAN SECURITY

The Realist
Foundations
of
Strategy

BHARAT KARNAD

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藏书章





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In completing this study I feel relieved for a personal reason. A certain observation by my daughter acted as a goad throughout the many years, when at least three other book projects were started and, for various reasons, abandoned. Asked by her younger brother, Ketan, whether Daddy was writing a book I overheard Riti, then all of eight years of age, explain patiently that "Daddy does not write books, he only reads them." As a 16-year-old, there is no guarantee she will be impressed. But the satisfaction I feel is laced with regret that, try as I might, I was unable to finish this book in time for my father to read it in full.

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BHARAT KARNAD

Introduction

The world is a far more dangerous place in the 1st century of the new millennium than ever before. The slew of small wars, secessionist movements, insurgencies, and territorial disputes that have pockmarked international relations and unsettled countries at a fundamental level,¹ are now topped by unimaginably terrifying acts of terrorism. Like turning fully laden passenger aircraft into guided missiles to ram skyscrapers.

The successor international system to the Cold War regime that is now emerging is characterised by fluid situations and cross-cutting national interests, in which uncertainty about the future is fuelled as much by well-meaning friends as known adversaries. In a system of nation-States, that shows no sign of conforming to the millennial yearning for peace and brotherhood, and with the United Nations proving incapable of amicably resolving conflicts or keeping the peace, major countries are scrambling to make separate arrangements for their own defence. There is talk about the globalisation of security.² But all that has meant is the rationalisation and the spread of traditional strategy fuelled by hope that because States have more power but less control, prudent policies will accrue.³

As the strongest economic and military entity in the world, the United States of America has begun to betray imperial yearnings.⁴ The real trouble is, it seems to be persuaded that chasing absolute security is a far

¹ See Bharat Karnad, 'Introduction' in Bharat Karnad (ed), *Future Imperilled: India's Security in the 1990s and Beyond*, New Delhi, Viking, 1994; pp 1-2.

² The Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres says that "Both the economy and security have become global." See his 'Worldly Wise', *Hindustan Times*, November 22, 2001.

³ Jean Marie Guehenno, 'The Impact of Globalisation of Policy', *Survival*, Winter 1998-99; pp 12, 19.

⁴ Thomas E Ricks, 'US Urged to Embrace An 'Imperialist' Role', Washington Post Service, *International Herald Tribune*, August 22, 2001.

from chimerical exercise, even if this means withdrawing from international agreements⁵ and contemplating the use of advanced nuclear and conventional military weaponry against manifestly unequal adversaries.⁶ That the nuclear threshold is thus lowered does not seem to bother Washington.⁷ Predictably, this has occasioned feelings of relative insecurity in everybody else. Arbitrary and unilateral actions in pursuit of narrow national self-interest and justified by the doctrine of *raison d'état* (reason of State), naturally leads to other countries emphasising nuclear weapons as a means of dampening the threat of nuclear weapons-use, or resorting to other means in an asymmetrical context, and to unobtrusive efforts at balancing the would-be universal hegemon.

Combines like the India-Russia-China axis are being mooted, though without much conviction.⁸ European States apprehensive of becoming mere adjuncts of the US, are trying to stitch together 'global and comprehensive cooperation'⁹ with countries, like India, in the security field in the hope that congeries of such strong military groupings (like, for instance, Russia, France, China and India) will extend their influence and moderate

⁵ Tom Daschle, the majority leader in the US Senate, said of the George W Bush Administration's asking for 57 per cent increase in the defence budget, its support for the unproven ballistic missile defence system, and the US government's threat to withdraw from as many as six international treaties as a 'singleminded approach' to national security. "Our allies will follow us only if we use our unparalleled strength and prosperity to advance common interests", he said. "Only then will our power inspire respect instead of resentment." See Nautilus Institute, 'Nuclear Policy', <http://www.nautilus.org/nukepolicy/index.html>

⁶ The US Department of Defence has operational plans for the use of precision-guided nuclear and thermonuclear armaments against Russia and China as well as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya and North Korea. See Paul Richter, 'Bush has N-plans against 7 countries', LA Times/Washington Post Service, *The Indian Express*, March 10, 2002.

⁷ Michael R Gordon, 'Has US lowered the nuclear threshold?', New York Times Service, *International Herald Tribune*, March 12, 2002.

⁸ Russia is keenest about such a trilateral arrangement. India is doubtful it will work and China is convinced it won't, and thinks bilateral relations the better bet. Chinese Ambassador Hua Junduo said that while there were certain common interests between the three countries and there should be consultations among them, "the priority on our part [is] to strengthen and improve bilateral relations." See 'China opposes Russia's trilateral axis proposal', *The Times of India*, February 9, 2002.

⁹ This was part of a statement by the French Ambassador Bernard de Montferrand. See 'After sub deal, France offers long-term ties', *The Times of India*, February 23, 2002.

the American enthusiasm for compellence measures, adventurism and ready resort to force and, in a peaceable sort of way, countervail the US in the international system.¹⁰ Similar thinking is also motivating the Russian policy of building-up India in the defence field, with an additional incentive that a militarily strong and confident India would distract China in southern Asia and relieve Chinese pressure on the oil and other natural resources-rich but demographically empty Russian Siberia.¹¹

Against the backdrop of increasing anarchy at the State and sub-State level and a heavy-handed attempt at imposing American solutions at the global level, three countries—Russia, India and China—are particularly affected. Russia, because it is trying to lift itself up by its bootstraps, and to strategically balance the US. And India and China because the ‘free ride’ in the nuclear security sphere they enjoyed during the Cold War is over. India was effectively under the Western nuclear umbrella in the first two decades after Independence. China exploited the overhang provided by the 1972 US-Soviet Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and built a small, but megaton-yield, offensive ballistic missile force, to deter both the US and the Soviet Union at a time when the limited missile defence this treaty afforded the two super powers was deployed by each against the possibility of use of its missiles by the other. The situation has become more inelastic since then with countries, like India and China, unable anymore to play off one power against the other and requiring to align their strategic plans and policies vis-à-vis the sole super power, the United States.

But America’s preeminence coupled to its tendency to throw its weight around¹² has resulted in an ‘arms control winter’ that may lead to an augmentation of the Russian and Chinese Multiple Independently-targetable Re-entry Vehicles-outfitted Inter Continental Ballistic Missiles to counter

¹⁰ Senior official from the Asia and Oceania department of the *Quai d’Orsay* (The French Foreign Office), Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi, December 23, 1996.

¹¹ “We are willing to go beyond the sale and lease of hi-tech weapons”, said Russian Deputy Prime Minister Ilya Klebanov. He revealed he had come to India with ‘new proposals’ for pooling of scientific and financial resources of Russia and India. See ‘Russia wants to design, develop weapons with India’, *The Times of India*, February 7, 2002.

¹² For the case that American ‘imperialism’ is necessary to rescue failed nation-States and to mount worldwide anti-terrorism campaigns, see Sebastian Mallaby, ‘The Reluctant Imperialist’, *Foreign Affairs*, March/April 2002.

the US National Missile Defence/Theatre Missile Defence,¹³ and in India's acquiring an all-aspect nuclear force capable of deterring not just a gradation of nuclear threats ranging from Pakistan to China, but also sustained political pressure and conventional military coercion from any quarter, including the United States as a bet-hedging strategy. The fact of the matter is that nuclear weapons have had their importance significantly enhanced as the ultimate safeguards of sovereignty and as enforcers of peace obtained on one's own terms.

For India, the challenge is at two levels. Insurgencies, secessionist movements and domestic unrest pose grave internal security threats. In one sense, these are normal problems of nation-building that in the 18th and 19th centuries led to a great deal of domestic turmoil and bloodletting within agglomerations of peoples in Europe and Northern America in the process of becoming nation-States. Different communities were forcibly amalgamated into the whole or eliminated. The genocidal excesses against the native Indians in America is a case in point. Divergent cultures and value systems were forced by military means to merge with the mainstream. Again the fratricidal American Civil War provides an example. In the new millennium, the same nation-building processes are afoot but this time under the glare of international media. Thus, the Hindu-Muslim tensions, playing out before the peoples of the world, for instance, may not merely invite opprobrium but international intervention. Such intervention in the form initially of economic and political pressures may even escalate to the military level.

To ensure that such social frictions are contained will require a revamping of administrative procedures. A Home Ministry team first studied the anatomy of communal riots in the 1960s, and other such reports followed but many of the more striking administrative and political remedies that have been suggested have not got the government's approval.¹⁴ Thwarting foreign interventions in force will, on the other hand, require a

¹³ According to a US National Intelligence Estimate, China is expected to field 75-100 long-range warheads by 2015. See Alex Wagner, 'Intelligence Estimate Upgrades Chinese, Iranian Missile Threats', *Arms Control Today*, March 2002. Also see Bruno Tertrais, 'Deterrence and Non-Proliferation: The Way Ahead' in Air Commodore (Retd) Jasjit Singh (ed), *Asia's New Dawn: The Challenges to Peace and Security*, New Delhi, Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses and Knowledge-World, 2000; pp 167-168.

¹⁴ A former senior Home Ministry official; personal communication.

strategic arsenal that can deter would-be international policemen. To deal with cross-border terrorism and foreign-assisted insurgencies will necessitate the build-up of intermediate conventional military capabilities of the Commando/Special Forces-type to complement the regular military and to tackle sub-limited wars, mount counter-guerrilla campaigns, operate deep in the enemy's rear, and generally to prosecute actions requiring stealth. Such a capability will provide the government, wary of cross-border conventional military actions precipitating a nuclear exchange, with options. In the larger scheme of things, Special Forces will also widen the firebreak between conventional military conflict and nuclear war, and pay Pakistan or China back in kind and, along with the regular military wherewithal, throttle Islamabad's nuclear sabre-rattling and tackle the cussedness of a plainly unequal foe that is more pest than threat. It will also put a stop to Islamabad's juvenile antics of brandishing the atomic bomb as if it were a knuckle-duster for street-fighting.¹⁵ It would be imprudent, however, to prioritise expenditure on anti-terrorist military capability at the expense of the strategic nuclear wherewithal.¹⁶

In the external realm, it means India protecting itself, specifically against the willfulness of the United States and the sustained, if opportunistic belligerence of China. To deal with the more immediate military and nuclear threat from China and to deter the US from coercively turning its military prowess against India on any pretext in the future demands the early acquisition of strategic armaments, that the Indian government has shied away from, namely, megaton-yield thermonuclear warheads/weapons married to intercontinental range ballistic and cruise missiles in sizeable numbers. Acquisition by India of such high-value-high-yield nuclear forces, moreover, will be in line with the 'security logic', that Richard Falk of Princeton University says the Indian government has followed since the

¹⁵ The most recent such outburst was by Pakistan President, General Pervez Musharraf, in his interview to the German magazine, *Der Spiegel*, in which he warned "India to count on the fact that if the pressure on Pakistan becomes too great, then nuclear weapons use (is possible) as a last means of defence." See Rashmee Z Ahmed, 'Musharraf brandishes the N-bomb', *Sunday Times of India*, April 7, 2002.

¹⁶ This is what K Subrahmanyam seems to imply in his 'Not guns vs butter', *The Economic Times*, February 8, 2002.

1998 tests, “based on the same sort of power politics that have guided the approach of the existing nuclear weapons states.”¹⁷

In a patently asymmetric nuclear war situation, the only way to stifle the urge of a superior power to mount, what President Jimmy Carter’s National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, called a ‘designed’ attack that would leave the victim “crippled, capable of only spasmodic, disorganised and strategically aimless response—or even none at all” using precision-guided low-yield nuclear weapons¹⁸ that President George W Bush’s Pentagon plans on unleashing against troublesome countries (including Russia and China),¹⁹ is to deter the US with massively and indiscriminately destructive megaton thermonuclear bombs, that will also compensate for intercontinental ballistic missile inaccuracies at extreme range. There is no other way.

Russia will likely respond to this American ‘policy of the nuclear stick’ which, Dmitry Rogozin, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Duma, said is “intended to intimidate us and put us in our place”²⁰ by strengthening its offensive forces and China will probably follow suit.²¹ Strategic targeting technology now available with the US makes it possible to acquire any target anywhere in the world within its nuclear and conventional military cross-hairs virtually instantaneously. This combined with the new American doctrine of ‘offensive deterrence’, means greater emphasis on preemptive strikes.²² The current warmth in Indo-US relations cannot hide the fact that the growth of the Indian deterrent is seen as threatening by the United States. It may be recalled that not too long ago the US Department of Defence justified the hypersonic bomber

¹⁷ Richard Falk, ‘India’s Nuclearism and the New Shape of World Order’, March 2000, <http://www.transnational.org/forum/meet/2000/falk-India.html>

¹⁸ Zbigniew Brzezinski, *Game Plan: How to Conduct the US-Soviet Contest*, Boston, Atlantic Monthly Press, 1986; p 110.

¹⁹ See Fn 6.

²⁰ Vladimir Radyuhin, ‘US ‘plan’ against Russia may affect talks’, *The Hindu*, March 11, 2002.

²¹ Satu P Limaye, *Nuclear Weapons Challenges in Asia*, Honolulu, Asia-Pacific Center for Strategic Studies, 2001; pp 16-17. <http://apcss.org/Nuclear%20Weapons%20Challenges%20in%20Asia.html>

²² Walter Pincus, ‘US nuclear policy turns to ‘offensive’ deterrence’, *The Washington Post, International Herald Tribune*, March 25, 2002.

programme in terms of its being able specifically to hit targets in India, among other countries.²³ In that sense, India is safe only as long as it toes the American line. But to do so when it ill-serves the national security interests is to put the country's future in hock to a great power. Should India obtain megaton thermonuclear-ICBM capability to deter the US, Beijing too will be careful about giving offence.

If the US poses a latent threat to India, the more immediate and principal threat is and will continue to be China, which presents as great a danger because of its strategically inimical policies, as because of the possibility of its disintegration and collapse,²⁴ leading to a host of nuclear-armed 'warlord states' on India's periphery. But whether or not it so disintegrates, China, as the Cabinet Secretary, TR Prasad, has stated, "is bound to bring in 'coercive bargaining' " in its relations with India. In that case, he wondered, if New Delhi would be "prepared to resort to the military option."²⁵ But to resort to the 'military option', it has to first have the wherewithal. Absent such strategic capabilities, India may have little choice other than to comply with Chinese demands, which is intolerable. The larger objective should be to reduce China's 'centrality' to Asian countries by putting counter-pressure. This is the objective behind the recent changes in American policy, for instance, with regard to militarily beefing up Taiwan and letting Beijing know that any aggression against the island-State would bring the US in on the side of Taipei.²⁶ India should likewise create precisely the kind of dilemmas for China that Beijing has created for it with respect to a nuclear weapons and missile-equipped Pakistan by arming Vietnam with strategic weapons, establishing a naval presence in Cam Ranh Bay and elsewhere in South-East Asia, to match China's

²³ This information was carried by the American magazine, *Popular Science*. See *Vayu: Journal of the Indian Aerospace Society*, Vol 1, 2000.

²⁴ The increasing loss of social and economic control over the Chinese people leading to a confrontation between the masses and the Communist Party rulers, in which the PLA may find it politic not to side with the government, is envisioned by Gordon G Chang, a Western financial analyst based in China. In fact, he gives Communist China another 5-10 years before it collapses. See his *The Coming Collapse of China*, New York, Random House, 2001.

²⁵ Comments by Cabinet Secretary TR Prasad at the meeting to inaugurate the Centre for the Study of National Security, India International Centre, November 4, 2000.

²⁶ Murray Heibert and Susan V Lawrence, 'Crossing the Red Lines', *Far Eastern Economic Review*, April 4, 2002.

ensconsed military positions in Myanmar as also in Gwadar on Pakistan's Makran Coast, cooperating with Taiwan in the nuclear and missile fields, and coordinating its activities in Washington with those of the Taiwan lobby. China's masterful manipulation of the level of support to Pakistan as a means of influencing Indian policy and diluting New Delhi's perception of China as threat has worked,²⁷ but only because New Delhi seems to lack the nerve to impose heavy strategic costs on China by linking up with Vietnam and Taiwan, and leading the 'free Tibet' campaign in a tit-for-tat policy. This is the way to neutralise China's encirclement policy and its 'Pakistan card' which, according to an American Sinologist John W Garver, is also "the ultimate deterrent against an Indian alignment" with the US.²⁸ But central to evening out the strategic balance vis-à-vis both China and the US is the size and quality of India's nuclear force.

It is all very well for New Delhi to claim that it is following a policy of engagement plus containment of China, like every other major power seems to be doing. But such a policy will be exploited by Beijing if all it consists of are crypto-appeasement measures and amounts only to talking softly without having a big stick by your side.²⁹ While engagement could involve trying to strengthen economic relations and to increase the annual bilateral trade of \$3.5 billion manifold, containment will need acquisition of the will and the wherewithal to confront China singly, if necessary. To rely on US's strategic muscle to deal with China would be foolhardy because Washington will not hesitate to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with Beijing at the expense of Indian security as long as American national interests are served.³⁰ Prudence, therefore, dictates that India possess a hefty nuclear force boasting of around 350-400 warheads/weapons that can be construed as notional parity with the Chinese strategic forces.

²⁷ John W Garver, 'The Restoration of Sino-Indian Comity following India's Nuclear Tests', *China Quarterly*, December 2001; pp 888-889.

²⁸ *Ibid*; p 889.

²⁹ Manoj Joshi, 'India, China now want to do some serious business', *The Times of India*, April 8, 2002.

³⁰ Are American measures, like increasing military aid to Taiwan and military cooperation with India, a means of softening up the new Chinese supremo-to-be, Hu Jintao, for a possible Sino-US deal in the post-Cold War world? Why else would the George W Bush administration woo Hu? See Chidanand Rajghatta, 'Asking who's Hu, Washington woos Hu?' *The Times of India*, May 3, 2002.

India's attaining some kind of nuclear equivalence is essential because this alone will make China's aggressive posturing and threats harder to sustain.³¹

In the new international system, India has to be especially convinced about the unmatched political utility of the nuclear military power of the State. This is the starting point for all nuclear security planning. For Indian policy to remain locked in the arms control-disarmament paradigm, or to accept the thesis that the 'balance' between deterrence and non-proliferation is 'delicate', as has been cleverly argued by Bruno Tertrais, Director of Delegation for Strategic Affairs, French Ministry of Defence, is to fall into the rhetorical trap of having to choose between the two, and of having disproportionately to carry the burden for a skewed 'international strategic stability regime' that he advocates.³² Or, it is to accept the even more tendentious Western premise that nuclear deterrence is somehow different and less efficacious in the 'Asian context' and, hence, that non-proliferation is what Asian States should subscribe to.³³ Such arguments are self-serving piffle that protect the interests of what Tertrais charmingly calls the 'nuclear West'—the US, Britain and France, at the expense of the 'nuclear Rest',³⁴ and ought to be so dismissed.

Secondly, there needs to be a more realistic understanding about where the Indian strategic power invested in nuclear weapons stands in relation to the nation's economic and political strength and its civilisational reach. The relative values that may be assigned can be expressed schematically by a series of concentric circles, at the centre of which is the strategic military power of the State. This power is contained within a circle representing the economic capability of the country which, in turn, is encased in the still larger circle signifying the political power of the State. All these circles find

³¹ Walter Slocombe, *The Political Implications of Strategic Parity*, Adelphi Paper No. 77, London, International Institute of Strategic Studies, 1971.

³² Tertrais, 'Deterrence and Non-Proliferation: The Way Ahead'; pp 169-175.

³³ Thus, Christoph Bertram, Director of the German think-tank *Stiftung für Wissenschaft und Politik*, claimed somewhat disingenuously at a conference held in New Delhi that "there is very little that nuclear weapons will add to a country's (or conglomerate's) security. How they added to India's, for instance, is not at all obvious." See his 'The Future of Deterrence and Non-Proliferation in the Asian Context' in Jasjit Singh (ed), *Asia's New Dawn*; p 177.

³⁴ The notions of the 'nuclear West' and the 'nuclear Rest' explained in Tertrais, 'Deterrence and Non-Proliferation'; pp 173-174.

themselves encompassed by the largest circle representing the cultural-civilisational penumbra of the country. For a State to excel in the economic, political and civilisational spheres without firming up the centre is to proceed on the basis of a hollow core and to rely principally on the 'soft power' of the State. India, undoubtedly an economic giant in the making, can afford to spend an additional half a per cent of its Gross Domestic Product on the national nuclear deterrent to bring the total expenditure on national security to a still nominal three per cent of GDP. India's estimated GDP of \$529 billion in 2002, half that of China's of \$1,163 billion,³⁵ is expected to be nearly \$10 trillion by 2025, at six per cent rate of growth—the fourth largest after the US, China, and the European Union. Except that India with its slow and evolutionary policy of economic and social uplift, is appreciated, as having taken 'a better path' and set 'a more sustainable pace' than China.³⁶ With a democratically resilient and accommodating political system that allows the deprived sections of society to assert their rights and lay claim to their legitimate share of the national pie, there is unlikely to be the kind of violent systemic changes in India as are predicted for the hard but brittle totalitarian system in China even by the ruling Communist Party there.³⁷

India is a strong civilisational presence, at once radiating and drawing to itself cultural influences westward into the Gulf and West Asia, northward into Central Asia, and into the Java Sea and the Indo-Chinese littoral in South-East Asia and eastward as far as Japan. It has not lacked a sense of 'manifest destiny'—a conviction of inherent greatness which transcends the ebb and tide of history.³⁸ Bismarck referred to this aspect as 'state egoism' which, he said, distinguishes the 'large State' from a 'small' one.³⁹ It is just that Indian leaders, unlike Bismarck, want their country to

³⁵ *Asian Economic Survey 2000-2001* figures, published in *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, October 23, 2000.

³⁶ Bruce Gilley, 'Asia's Tortoise and Hare Story', *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, February 26, 2002.

³⁷ Eric H Eckholm, 'Chinese Warn of Civil Unrest Across Country: Communist Party Document Paints Picture of Discontent', New York Times Service, *International Herald Tribune*, June 2-3, 2001.

³⁸ For a recent expression of this civilisational confidence by Jaswant Singh, Minister of External Affairs in the BJP coalition government, see his *Defending India*, Basingstoke and London, Macmillan, 1999; pp 3-9.

³⁹ Edward Crankshaw, *Bismarck*, New York, the Viking Press, 1981; p 62.

become a great power on the cheap and without first putting in the effort or paying the entry price in terms of strategic military power.

Indeed, India has historically been found wanting in decisive military capability to deter and dissuade more powerful countries from taking liberties with it. In an earlier age, the lack of such capability led to British colonialism and, after Independence, to an existence ultimately on the margins even though the country nurtured strategic wherewithal that the government chose not to develop. The political opportunity costs of not going fully nuclear at certain critical junctures remain unassessed and the lessons of procrastination unlearned. Instead of securing the decisive military capability featuring megaton thermonuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles on a war-footing and ensuring a large enough inventory of weapons systems to join China, Britain and France in the 'second-tier' of nuclear countries, there has been the interminable public debate conducted mostly through newspaper columns about how the small, truncated, nuclear force the country has cobbled together is enough to meet any security contingency now and in the future. Or there is a regurgitation of the all too familiar theme from the 1950s and 1960s, about the allegedly high-costs of a substantial nuclear stance robbing development programmes of funds.

Such thinking is anti-historical in the sense that no great power aspirant has ever been limited by such considerations. Indeed, the healthy increases in military expenditures of the US, Russia, Britain, France and Japan in 1870-1939, for instance, is attributed mainly to 'ambition' and 'fear',⁴⁰ which are the *realpolitik* factors that most countries trying to become great powers are motivated by. Or, Indian policy-makers and the small section of the vocal Middle Class have proved susceptible to frightening projections about what nuclear war in the subcontinent would mean in terms of cities incinerated and people killed⁴¹ —the sort of scare-mongering common in the West of the 1950s and 1960s, when they are not swayed by exaggerated accounts of what economic sanctions and technology denial may do to retard the economic growth of the country. The idea has always been to frighten an already feeble-minded Indian political

⁴⁰ Jasen Castillo, Julia Lowell, Ashley J Tellis, Jorge Munoz and Benjamin Zycher, *Military Expenditures and Economic Growth*, Santa Monica, RAND, 2001.

⁴¹ For the first of such scare-scenarios, see Appendix 2, Rashid Naim, 'Asia's Day After: Nuclear War Between India and Pakistan?' in Stephen P Cohen (ed), *The Security of South Asia: American and Asian Perspectives*, New Delhi, Vistaar Publications, 1987.

leadership and government into forsaking nuclear forces the country needs to avoid immediate dangers and to settle down as a great power.

This political feeble-mindedness is in no small part because of the sedulously propagated myth about Mahatma Gandhi's doctrine of non-violence and morality and about how these factors allegedly inspired Jawaharlal Nehru's foreign and defence policies.⁴² These allegations, as the early Chapters in this study will try to show, are wrong. The Mahatma used morality as political instrument, which is not the same thing as propagating morality for its own sake and, even less, as acting morally. Nehru, for his part, was an old-fashioned, *realpolitik*-minded, statesman, who was alive to the imperatives of national security and wise to the uses of military power of the State. He did not flinch, as this study will show, from seeking the protection of the Western nuclear umbrella in the 1950s, and making the United States and Britain complicit in his diplomatic high-wire act of espousing non-alignment and the cause of disarmament. The Western help he sought was only as a stop-gap until indigenous nuclear weapons capabilities permitted India to become genuinely independent. Nehru, moreover, realised during the 1962 War with China, that such military protection as provided by the West was flimsy at best and could not be relied upon in a crisis.

The start of the new Century is nothing like the 1950s, when Nehru's double-faced policy was such a success. India now has the strategic technologies and does not need to depend on any outside power for security or economic aid. This fact makes the current policy of eschewing megaton thermonuclear weaponry and intercontinental range ballistic missiles and of keeping what small under-developed national deterrent there is in an undeployed and unready state—which will take time to reconstitute in a crisis, thereby leaving it fatally vulnerable to a disarming first strike, only because it pleases Washington—both foolhardy and incomprehensible. Worse, the Indian government pines for disarmament and hopes to use the country's nuclear weaponisation to push the five established nuclear

⁴² The anti-nuclear lobby led by journalists, like Praful Bidwai and Achin Vanaik have gone to the extent of depicting India's refusal to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and to test and nuclear weaponise as the 'second assassination' of Mahatma Gandhi, proving once and for all that they have neither studied the Mahatma and his methods, nor bothered dispassionately to evaluate the politico-military value and utility of nuclear weapons in a world as is, not as they would ideally like it to be. See their *South Asia on a Short Fuse: Nuclear Politics and the Future of Global Disarmament*, New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1999; pp150-152.