

In-House Panel Discussion

EVOLVING INTERNATIONAL NUCLEAR ORDER (MAINSTREAMING NUCLEAR PAKISTAN)



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STRATEGIC VISION INSTITUTE (SVI), ISLAMABAD

Strategic Vision Institute (SVI) organized a one-day In-House Panel Discussion on the topic titled “Evolving International Nuclear Order (Mainstreaming Nuclear Pakistan)” held on October 20, 2015. Two guest speakers Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Director School of Politics and International Relations; Quaid-i-Azam University, and Brig. Zahir ul Kazmi, Director Arms Control and Disarmament Affairs (ACDA), were invited to discuss Evolving International Nuclear Order in the light of recently published article/report “Normal Nuclear Pakistan,” co-written by Michael Krepon and Toby Dalton. The speakers deliberated upon the high stakes for Pakistan’s national security if it ceded to various proposals made by the US’ think tanks for Pakistan’s admission into the nuclear mainstream. Dr. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, President SVI, welcomed and offered his thanks to the worthy speakers and participants for gracing the occasion with their presence.



Dr. Zafar Cheema opened the panel discussion by mentioning the five so-called ‘Brackets’ that have been proposed to Pakistan in the report if it wants to become a mainstream normal nuclear state. He stated that the report recommends that Pakistan should comply with proposed measures in order to be considered a normal nuclear state. Resultantly, by adhering to these proposals Pakistan might be able to get the wavier in Nuclear Suppliers Groups (NSGs). The first proposed bracket is; Pakistan should shift its declaratory policy from “full spectrum” to “strategic deterrence”, which means that Pakistan should not develop Tactical Nuclear Weapons (TNWs) and go back to its previous posture. The second bracket urges Pakistan to commit to a recessed deterrence posture, which means it should put a limit on the production of short-range delivery vehicles and TNWs. The report also suggests that Pakistan should lift its veto on Fissile Material Cutoff Treaty (FMCT) and reduce stockpiles of fissile material. Moreover, Pakistan should separate its civilian and military nuclear program and sign Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) without waiting for India. In light of these conditions Dr. Cheema raised a very pertinent question as to what would be the implications for



Pakistan if it followed these suggestions i.e. what option will Pakistan have if India goes for further nuclear tests if in case Pakistan signs CTBT. He made a point that it is very discriminatory to keep these brackets or conditions for Pakistan for it to become a mainstream nuclear weapon state or to get exemption like India, while on the other hand, US has signed 123 Agreement with India under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) without any preconditions with regards to Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Dr. Cheema further argued that the information in the report is largely twisted as it proclaims that Pakistan would become the third largest possessors of nuclear arsenals in the next 5 to 10 years after United States and Russia, claiming that with this pace Pakistan will soon surpass the nuclear arsenals of Britain, France, India and other nuclear states. Dr. Cheema therefore suggested that it is necessary to carefully analyze as to why and how such a conclusion by the western thinkers has been arrived, especially when India was not made to adhere to any such kind of conditions on its nuclear program and in a way has been openly allowed to outrun Pakistan qualitatively and quantitatively. In this backdrop, compliance with these conditions will have serious implications not only for Pakistan's nuclear program, but also for the strategic equilibrium between India and Pakistan, as well as for Pakistan's national security and strategic stability in the region.

Before formally inviting the speakers to deliberate on these aspects, Dr. Cheema requested Mr. Pervaiz Butt, former Chief at Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) to express his views in the light of his vast experience on the subject matter. While sharing his experience, he said that in 1960s when Pakistan's peaceful nuclear program was at its initial stages Canada asked Pakistan to sign on 'Dotted Lines' similar to the kind of these 'Brackets,' where in the case of non-compliance Canada would stop technological support to Pakistan for its nuclear program. The aim of that agreement was to halt any future effort by Pakistan to use nuclear technology for the making of a weapon. However, Pakistan did not sign the agreement and still managed to sustain the progress of nuclear energy program. In fact, all power plants worked very well despite the fact that Pakistan was economically as well as technologically very weak. Therefore, he inferred that Pakistan should not agree to these 'Brackets' as it still possesses the capacity and capability to manage with changing circumstances. He further added that the need of the hour is to focus on Pakistan's economical and technological advancement instead because it is not India that attracts the West but their big business market owing to their

modernization in technology and economy. Hence, Pakistan along with its nuclear program needs to focus on technological and economic advancement.

Speaking on the issue, Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal made two very pertinent arguments with regards to Pakistan's deterrence posture. First, he argued that nuclear posture or doctrine is not anyone's sole decision but it is very much enforced by the external environment, something that happens in the surroundings modifies state's defence posture accordingly. In this vein, it is impossible to remain stuck to one particular doctrine or set of rules as is demanded in the report. In his second point he stressed upon the fact that it is irrational to expect that Pakistan should cap or limit its nuclear program especially in an environment where there are no regional arms control arrangements among the strategic competitors. In fact, the changes in Pakistan's nuclear posture or transformation of minimum credible deterrence to full spectrum deterrence is the outcome of rational decision-making processes just as the qualitative and quantitative improvement of nuclear arsenals are in accordance with changing strategic environment. He added that this transformation in Pakistan's posture should not come as a surprise because the purpose of Pakistani nukes has always been to protect Pakistan from Indian military might.



As a student of International Relations, he further argued, we should focus on security paradigm from the angle of structural realist as it will not only assist us to understand the shift in Pakistan's nuclear posture but will also help to respond to the report of Toby Dalton and Michael Krepon. He believed that these writers are only writing from a limited perspective of the proponents of non-proliferation. However if one focuses on the international security paradigm and discourse in strategic stability, the only possibility of nuclear arms race in the region is evident on the bilateral level which does not pose much risk to the traditional nuclear order. He further said that if one focuses on the 'Brackets', especially the demand of limiting the range of Pakistan's missiles to India only, it shows that West has finally acknowledged Pakistan's rationale to build nuclear deterrence, therefore, it would not be wrong to state that in the last seventeen years Pakistan has been able to successfully project its necessity for making of a nuclear bomb. However he suggested that there is a dire need to understand the Western agenda

keeping in mind that there is a difference in the thinking process of US administration and the Western think tank community. Thus, now it is essential to understand that they are not asking to just rollback the program but are stressing upon a specific kind of bracket. This bracket further needs to be examined in two realms, i.e. qualitative restrictions and quantitative restrictions. If hypothetically speaking, Pakistan has crossed the threshold range of ballistic missiles i.e. 3000-5000, as is being claimed in the report, then it should oblige by restraining the program, but that is not the case. Moreover, if it is about safety and security of our nuclear program then Pakistan has already proven itself to be a responsible, rational state to have nuclear weapon under Resolution 1540 of the UNSC. At the same time the discriminatory Western thinking is quite visible from the fact that despite the presence of empirical evidences regarding India's Cold Start Doctrine, the West is intentionally ignoring its potentially devastating consequences for the region. Dr. Jaspal stressed that this is the point to focus on as to how Indian lobbies have been working and selling the ideas in their interests. However, he mentioned that the good thing for Pakistan is that in September 2015 an Indian Army Chief stated that India can fight a short swift war with Pakistan. It means Indians have an option on the table and they are willing to exercise it too. Thus, it provides Pakistan with a rationale to enhance its nuclear capability since Pakistan cannot match up with the conventional muscle of India.

However, he opined, if Pakistan agrees to comply with the "brackets" and considers the incentives given in the report; it would still be at a loss because no matter what the Western behavior towards Pakistan would remain biased. Moreover, acceding to those demands would make Pakistan unable to respond or deter extra-regional aggressor in case of any conflict. He further added that Nasr and other short range TNWs are part of the advancement in technology and science. Putting it in simple words, Pakistan cannot restrict its nuclear program owing to the plethora of reasons including prevalent stability-instability paradox in the region, vulnerability-invulnerability, and absence of missile defense system because unless Pakistan has missile defense capability it is irrational for Pakistan to restrain qualitative and quantitative improvements in its missile program. Last but not the least, Pakistan should advance its nuclear program to adapt credible minimum full spectrum deterrence especially when India is increasing its capability with the help of America in terms of aero-space technology, and air, land and sea based military might.

The next guest speaker, Brig Zahir ul Kazmi, started with elaborating on the three main points: International Nuclear Order, Mainstreaming of Pakistan in Nuclear Order, and



Deterrence. He stated that the global order or the disorder shapes the nuclear order as well. Presently the nuclear order is shaped or balanced by the nine nuclear-armed states. The nuclear order also determines the role of non-proliferation regimes and defines the access policy to peaceful use of nuclear energy. The nuclear order is dominated by the developed countries that want to monopolize the nuclear order. Furthermore, the non-NPT

states have nuclear weapons and now want to come in the line of mainstream nuclear weapon states as they seek greater access to the dual use of nuclear technology. The developed states want to monopolize through Export Control Regimes (ECRs) and are keen to expand their role at political and economic forums. These states expect that other countries should also focus on the economic interests more than amassing the military might or worrying about the use of nuclear energy be it peaceful or otherwise. However, Brg. Kazmi maintained that this might eventually not be a wise course of action as is evident from what happened with China back in the day when it lost two wars, the Opium war and the other with Japan despite having a strong economy. So it proves that economy solely cannot provide the sufficient defence which can only be ensured if the states strengthen their nuclear capability.

He reiterated that there is more myth than reality in the exaggerated projection of Pakistan's nuclear arsenals. The so-called term nuclear "normalization" is itself a misnomer. If Pakistan wants to become "normal", which is not exceptional, it has the right to do so. There is no harm in seeking to access higher end technology to improve its economy and for other purposes. He argued that it is the Non-Proliferation Regimes that are not behaving normally, as in 2008 they gave waiver to India but did not consider Pakistan for the same concession. At that time, if they were giving exemption to any one state then they should have given similar waivers to all the other Non-NPT nuclear weapon states too.

Further elaborating on the issue he said that presently Pakistan is left with just two options. One is to continue to compete with India, and the other option is to sign various non-

nuclear proliferation initiatives and become normal nuclear state. Although the first option might eventually exhaust Pakistan, the second option brings with it even more devastating consequences as they propose constraints on nuclear weapon program in order to get a nuclear deal and to be part of Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) etc. Brg. Zahir said that there should be a balanced and uniform criteria for all the states. The cost-benefit analysis proves that Pakistan needs to be cautious and should not compromise on its national interest. Discussing the developments in the South-Asia region, Brg. Kazmi opined that Pakistan is only reactionary with regards to the development of TNWs, while it is no secret that India is the one which prompts this action by continuously undertaking several initiatives, posing direct threat to Pakistan's security. He maintained that Pakistan is very specific when it comes to the development of nuclear technology while international community is shamelessly biased towards India. One can see that India is consistently modernizing its conventional and nuclear facilities. It has signed 13 agreements only for peaceful purposes, while having 8 reactors out of safeguards. India also possesses 2 fast breeder reactors and 4 smaller reactors, while Pakistan's defence budget is hardly 1/7th to India's. If in case India exercises the option of waging limited conventional war against Pakistan as it has expressed through Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) then obviously Pakistan does not have any option but to develop short range nuclear weapons (TNWs) and Nasr to protect its own sovereignty and security.

After the discussion of the guest speakers, Dr. Cheema invited Amb. (Retd.) Ali Sarwar Naqvi to express his views on the issue. Amb. (Retd.) Naqvi opined that it is habitual for America to coin new terms every now and then. In 1998 Americans forced Pakistan on "rolling back", this stance was later replaced by the demand to "reduce Highly Enrich Uranium (HEU)", and now they have introduced yet another new term; "normalization". He said that knowing Toby Dalton and Michael Krepon personally, he is aware that they both play a significant role in the US administration and keep floating these new ideas to the administration. Now these five points are part of the same mindset where their greater stress is on the signing of CTBT and FMCT. Thus the major question that arises is if Pakistan really needs this deal? The answer is yes, off course, it is our right and we are much qualified too. But for that if Pakistan is being asked to sign CTBT, then Pakistan should very firmly stress that the US should first demand India to do the same.

Dr. Adil Sultan, Director Research and Analysis PDS Strategic Plan and Division, added to the debate and said that why it is that only Pakistan is being targeted when the nuclear



programs of both India and Pakistan are growing at the same rate as is evident from the empirical data of the last decade. He then provided the rationale for the emergence of this report. According to him, it was in 2009 that the President of United States President Barak Obama came with an agenda in which he said that he will either conclude the FMCT or will secure the initiation of negotiations on the treaty. Therefore, the pressure on the current US administration has been building since 2009 with the focus that it should make Pakistan agree to the initiation of FMCT negotiations. However, another event

that has given momentum to FMCT is the Iranian Deal. After this deal, there is more dynamism within the State department expecting that they can achieve more benchmarks like that with other states as well. On the contrary, Pakistan was not negotiating any deal in the first place unlike Iran, as those were only normal bilateral talks on nuclear issues. Regarding the range of Pakistan's missiles and the production of TNWs, he was quite concerned as to why Washington is so much worried about this. In fact, he argued, it is the Indian lobby, which is influencing the think tanks and the U.S. administration to raise these issues with Pakistan. In conclusion, he said that Pakistan has been saying very categorically that its nuclear program is solely India specific and aims at warding off Indian aggression at every spectrum of threat.

The debate was followed by an extensive question answer session where the audiences posed various questions to the speakers and also presented their own observations, making the overall discussion even more enriching.

Col. Galib from Strategic Plans Division stated that it was in 2011 when for the first time the terminology of "fastest growing" was used in an article by Robert Norris and Hans Kristensen. It is very important to know that it was the time period when India had two plutonium reactors Cirus and Dhruva, however, as per the schedule, Indians had to shut down Cirus in 2010, so, as of 2011, India had one plutonium producing reactor. However, on the contrary, Pakistan was building its 3rd Khushab nuclear reactor. In this backdrop and by juxtaposing these various pieces of information, the West came up with the idea that apparently

India was opting for a decrease while Pakistan on the other hand is continuously increasing its nuclear capability. However, new Indian reactor Trombay is of 100 MW capacity, therefore, now Indians have two dedicated plutonium reactors with the capacity of 200 MWs. Interestingly, it seems that despite all these concrete figures, India has still successfully managed to convince Americans that its uranium enrichment is for peaceful purposes only.

Muhammad Umar, Assistant Professor, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, NUST, before asking a question, pointed out a weakness on part of Pakistan where he said that the policy makers and think tanks in Pakistan do not interact with the concerned departments that are exclusively dedicated to working on these issues/aspects, instead Pakistan only tends to react to the reports coming out from Carnegie and Stimson center etc. He then asked panelists about the implications of separating or labeling the reactors as civilian and military reactors. Dr. Ansar Perviaz, former Chairman, Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) answered that it all depends on ones will and intention as civilian and military programs can be separated in a matter of one day but only if one wants to. Having said that, an important thing to notice in this regard is that prior to the Indo-U.S. nuclear deal in 2008, Indian power plants had very low efficiency because of the insufficiency of uranium; however, after the deal one can see a marked difference. After 2008, when Indians started getting uranium in 2009 and 2010, their plants were running at a very high rate because the uranium that had to be divided for use in civil and military programs was then solely being used for military purposes as they were getting surplus uranium for civilian reactors. Dr Adil Sultan added to the discussion by mentioning that with regards to separation of facilities, there will be different standards for Pakistan as there have been in the cooperation of civil nuclear technology. Dr. Zafar Cheema added to the discussion and made a very valid point that since both India and Pakistan are not members of full-scope IAEA; hence do not have to comply with any safeguards. If Pakistan has developed a reactor of its own, like Khushab, it does not have to be under safeguards as long as Pakistan is not a member of the NPT, in which case the subsequent IAEA full scope safeguards do not apply.

Dr. Tughral Yamin, Associate Dean, Department of Peace and Conflict Studies; NUST, suggested that it is a positive development that the U.S is looking to engage with Pakistan. It is a rather good thing and Pakistan should not be afraid of this engagement, whether they are offering us lollipops or other gains. The need of the time is to discuss the relevant issues in detail with the

US and among ourselves. Brig. Zahir ul Kazmi agreed that there is no doubt that it is good to interact with the U.S, but Pakistan should very carefully move forward undertaking a cost-benefit analysis. Dr. Jaspal added that Pakistan should engage with the Americans but not at the cost of its national security. Secondly, Pakistan should adopt a confident posture and have to see open mindedly as to what these brackets means.

Mr. Baqir Sajjad Syed, Diplomatic and National Security Correspondent at DAWN, commented that the cooperation between Pakistan and United States has to be on a give and take basis. Pakistan is not clear on what it can offer to the US and this is where today's discussion needs to focus on instead of only claiming the report to be a hypothetical discussion initiated by two Western scholars, because the recent narrative shows that the deal between Pakistan and the US or at least some dialogue regarding that is very much on the table in the upcoming meeting of the two state leaders.

Mr. Zafar Ali, Former Director Strategic Export Control Division, Foreign Affairs; MOD, stated that both the International order and nuclear order are a continuous process. The future order depends on the redundancy of the game changes wherein it doesn't matter whether it is in the favor of Pakistan or not. Hence, in the light of that what actions should Pakistan take to be mainstreamed in the nuclear order? Dr. Jaspal replied that Pakistan should stick with the UNSC Resolution 1540 and try to project what Pakistan has done, what it is doing, and how it is doing that. Secondly, Pakistan should be more proactive. On a lighter note, technically speaking, if France can sell Bahrain the rocket, can Pakistan also not sell the rockets in the international market? Probably then the International community will come running and make Pakistan a member of these regimes. Brg. Kazmi added by saying that Pakistan is a confident, responsible nuclear power and it should continue to behave like one.

Ms. Sitara Noor, Visiting Faculty NUST, asked if there was a possibility of reaching a bargain or having a breakthrough in the upcoming meeting between president Obama and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, which may lead to the conclusion of a nuclear deal between US and Pakistan? To which Brig. Zahir Kazmi candidly replied that he needs to have a crystal ball in order to say anything with a degree of certainty and since he did not have one, there is no way of knowing the answer to that.

Dr. Zafar Cheema in the end offered his deepest thanks to the participants and the worthy speakers and gave his concluding remarks. He reiterated that the proposals offered in the report by the American think tanks are highly discriminatory which only aim to persecute Pakistan while giving free hand to India. He very firmly stated that Pakistan doesn't need to change its stance from Full-Spectrum Deterrence to Strategic Deterrence since the entire Western initiated qualitative and quantitative comparisons of Indian and Pakistani nuclear capabilities are highly unreliable and far from the fact. He recommended that the US needs to exhibit a balanced and nondiscriminatory approach towards Pakistan's entry into nuclear mainstream.