

## Overview

This special edition of Margalla Papers covers two major themes pertaining to Pakistan's Nuclear Program and Policy. First theme is "Reviewing Pakistan's Nuclear Policy and Revisiting Deterrent Stability". It addresses a host of questions that broadly include the following;

- Are nuclear weapons adequately placed in Pakistan's defence policy?
- What are the gains made and losses suffered by Pakistan due to nuclear weapons?
- Has a balance been attained between nukes and conventional weapons in terms of their effective employment?
- Where do nukes fit in Pakistan's broader threat perception in the near and distant future?
- Will the policy of Minimum Nuclear Deterrence work? If yes, for how long?
- What are the possible challenges to Pakistan's future deterrent posture and what are the proposed ways and means to sort them out?
- Does Pakistan need to officially declare a document on Nuclear Doctrine?
- Is there a need to change existing perceptions over the Pakistan's doctrinal issues, especially at the international level?

Second theme is "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons and Global Concerns: Addressing the Challenges". Following questions are given more attention in this context;

- Are international concerns over the security and safety of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal genuine?
- Is it really the myth of an "Islamic Bomb" that is the source of concern for the West? If yes, how to resolve this dilemma?

- Is there a potential possibility of future proliferation from Pakistan?
  - If Yes, how to prevent it?
  - If No, how to assure the international community?
- What would make the world accept Pakistan's nuclear status and what do we need to do to make the world learn to live with it?

Major challenges that have been identified during the course of discussion include the issue of conceptual ambiguities regarding nuclear deterrence, internal instability as a source sending wrong signals abroad and the dilemma created by Pakistan's engagement in the War on terror, unacceptability of Pakistan's support for the US at home, possible threats because of the presence of ERF near Pakistan's borders and the possible implications of all these factors on Pakistan's nuclear arsenal.

Cluster of recommendations have been floated both by the speakers and participants. Some of these are as follows;

- Pakistan's nuclear policy needs to be revised in accordance with the broadening spectrum of threats. Deterrence strategy needs to keep into account the presence of extra-regional forces on Pakistan's borders and the possibility of threats emanating out of their presence in the near future.
- Pakistan needs to work out a thorough response to the Indian Cold Start Strategy.
- Internal instability needs to be mitigated as soon as possible because it is sending negative signals to the international community raising doubts about the safety and security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal. No loophole should be left at home to be exploited by the foreign powers as a pretext to take action against Pakistan or its nuclear facilities.
- Pakistan's defence policy does not reflect any major change in terms of the mindset or strategic thinking. There is a need to work out a more effective nuclear

policy that should help evolve a strategy with lesser reliance on conventional weapons.

- There is an urgent need to produce a rebuttal from the academic community of all that is so frequently coming out from Western print and electronic media accusing Pakistan as an alleged Proliferator.
- Minimum Credible Deterrence is based on subjectivity. Also it is a highly relative term. What is sufficient today may not really be sufficient tomorrow to ensure minimum credible deterrence. Hence there is a dire need to continuously upgrade Pakistan's nuclear weapons arsenal and to acquire assured second strike capability as soon as possible.
- Political positions are becoming more important than legal positions in the world of arms control. Therefore there is a need to do a lot of preparatory work on all the issues that are likely to cause problems for Pakistan in this regard. One such issue is the idea of Nuclear Weapons Free World that is gaining currency these days in most of the debates on nuclear proliferation. There is a need to do the homework on all such issues beforehand.
- Pakistan needs to openly maintain that the question of its adherence to the NPT is not linked with that of India. And that Pakistan can not sign the NPT unless it is conferred with the status of a Nuclear Weapon State.
- In context of nuclear weapons there is a need to maintain a low-media profile. Exposure of the nuclear scientists to media is one such area where caution is must.
- Last but not the least, there is an urgent need to take corrective measures to make Pakistan's economy vibrant. Only a vibrant economy helps a state ensure sustainable development of both its conventional and nuclear defence systems.

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