

# **INDIA AND WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION & SPACE EXPLORATION**

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India is making great strides in the field of Nuclearisation and Space exploration. A country which has opposed Nuclear Weapons since 1945 now is in possession of Nuclear Weapons. It has started a Nuclear Arms Race in South Asia after it tested Nuclear weapons in May 1998. This test gave way for Pakistan also to follow suit. These two countries with unfriendly relations on the issue of Kashmir facing terrorism in its worst form are sitting on an explosive situation. Notwithstanding that both the countries with very low index of human development are determined to build up nuclear arsenals in a big way. India and Pakistan have not signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Virtually there is an arms race between India and Pakistan threatening Peace in South Asia.

India's Nuclear Policy is not only conditioned by its hostilities with Pakistan but also due to the other bigger neighbour which is a nuclear Power i.e. China. Now three neighbouring countries in Asia i.e. India, China and Pakistan are trying to defend themselves with Nuclear Weapons. With the Indo-US Nuclear Deal, the Nuclear Weaponisation program of India has got a boost. Now, more Uranium indigenously produced can be diverted to produce more Nuclear Weapons. Pakistan is also working hard to secure a similar deal with US for the same reasons which India had. In a draft released in 1999 India declared that it will not be the first Country to initiate a nuclear first strike and will pursue a policy of retaliation only. The outcome of the ongoing NPT Review Committee at present will have a great significance for South Asia. The China, India and Pakistan syndrome has to be diffused and prevent a nuclear catastrophe in the future.

India is making rapid strides in Space Technology. It is constantly updating its missile and rocket technology. It has now missiles to carry pay load of 200 to 1000 kg with a range of 150 to 5000 km. It is now targeting to develop nuclear capable missiles. Agni-3 and Agni-4 with a range of more than 5000 km. India started developing Ballistic Missile Defence Capability since 1995 and in 2001 India claimed to have intercepted a live ballistic missile. In January 2008 India announced that it has developed a two layered Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) system to counter enemy missiles. Hitherto India's Space policy is for peaceful purpose. But it may not be able to hide the temptation of joining the processes of Weaponisation of Space for a long time. The civilian attitude is against weaponisation of Space. But the Military is pursuing to the contrary. While inaugurating the International

Aerospace Power Seminar in 2007, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, the then external Affairs minister of India, said that "recent developments show that we are treading a thin line between current defence related use of space and its actual weaponisation. While the focus on aerospace power is natural, it is in our common interest to preserve outer space as sanctuary from weapons and guard it as the common, peaceful heritage of mankind". But the Air Force top thinks otherwise. Former Air Chief Marshall of India S. P. Tyagi disclosed that the Indian Air Force is in the process of establishing an "Aerospace Command to exploit outer space and control space based assets. The testing of an anti-satellite weapon by China on 1 June 2001 accelerated this thinking. Another former Indian Air Force Chief S. Krishna Swamy is on record to say that "any country on the fringe of space technology like India has to work toward such a command as advanced countries are already moving towards laser weapons platforms in space and killer satellites". India, collaborating with U.S for developing Ballistic Missile Defense systems is on the anvil. Mr. Dennis Cavin, Vice President of International Air and Missile Defense Strategic Initiative of Lockheed Martin disclosed that India could be looking for Washington help and that of other nations in developing crucial sub systems for the Ballistic Missile Defense Systems If the International Community fails to take steps in the direction of abolition of Nuclear Weapons and prevent an Arms Race in Outer Space, India may fall in line with US on these issues, keeping in view the growing economic and military might of china.

## **INDIA AND NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION**

The movement for abolition of nuclear weapons is half a century old. There is not a single country in the world in which the people are not clamouring for a total abolition of nuclear weapons. All sections of people are behind this demand. Even then the humanity is not closer to see "A World without Nuclear weapons ". There are only 8 countries which are in possession of these weapons of mass destruction including India which had apostles of peace and non-violence like Gautama Buddha and Mahatma Gandhi to the World. Former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi in his address to the UN General Assembly on June 9, 1988, twenty five years ago reiterated the well known fact that "nuclear war will not mean the death of hundred million people or even a thousand million. It will mean the extinction of four thousand million: the end of life as we know it on our planet Earth" He continued to say that "we come to the United Nations to seek your support. We seek your support to put a stop to this madness." Unfortunately India also joined the club of Madness. Government of India is not even in the front runners working for "A World Free of Nuclear weapons" Rajiv Gandhi also cautioned against weaponisation of outer space. He exhorted that "we must expand international cooperation in the peaceful use of outer space; the essential prerequisite for this is that outer space be kept free of all weapons. Instead there are plans

of developing, testing and deploying a space Weapons system. The Nuclear Arms Race cannot be ended and reversed without a moratorium on such activity". While the abolition of nuclear weapons is evading solution, a new threat of weaponisation of space and missile defense is emerging to spur an arms race in outer space. As the world knows that the Govt of United States of America has the distinction to be the first country to produce and use nuclear weapons on human beings killing lakhs of people in Hiroshima and Nagasaki on 6th and 9th August 1945. Since then the successive US Presidents never committed for abolition of nuclear weapons which resulted in a Nuclear Arms Race. In all the NPT Review Conferences the negative role of US was responsible for the failure to make any advancement on Article VI of the NPT.

When president Obama said in Prague on April 5, 2009 that "today I state clearly and with conviction, America's commitment to seek the peace and security of a world without Nuclear Weapons", it was the voice of the people he echoed and not the voice of the Pentagon. He also said that, 'as the only nuclear power to have used a nuclear weapon the United States has a moral responsibility to act". This is a positive and welcome commitment. But there is a sense of disappointment in President Obama's declaration that "this goal will not be reached quickly, perhaps not in my life time. It will take patience and persistence". Humanity has waited for more than half a century with patience and persistence. A world without nuclear weapons has to be achieved in his and our life time. He should say "YES WE CAN". The illegality of Nuclear Weapons has been well documented by the International Court of Justice and Weapons of Mass Destruction Commission headed by Hans Blix. In the Millennium Declaration in Sept 2000 it was agreed "to strive for the elimination of Weapons of Mass Destruction, particularly Nuclear Weapons and to keep all options for achieving this aim including the possibility of convening an International Conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear danger. One decade has passed since then there are no signs of materializing this pledge. The recent Conference on International Security from the Terrorists organized by the US indicates that Nuclear Weapons will continue to remain in the military arsenals. Notwithstanding the importance of this subject, it appears that this conference is a diversion from the main issue of calling an International Conference to discuss about complete elimination of the Weapons of Mass Destruction. In the midst of the Arab World, Israel is the only country in possession Nuclear Weapons. Why the global community led by the US is not bothered about Israel while threatening often North Korea and Iran. If a super power like the US and other members of the UN Security Council feel that Nuclear Weapons are required for defence of their countries, is it not a justification for the other countries also to have these weapons. We have to intensify our efforts to raise the voice of the people of the world louder and louder. There should be collective actions by the people of all the

countries. There should be an apex body of all the International Peace Organizations to intensify simultaneous global actions for abolition of Nuclear Weapons and Prevent an Arms Race in Outer Space.