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Japan's geopolitical and strategic imperatives for nuclear weapons were strongly existent in 2002 and highlighted by me then and when contextually reviewed in 2017 against the backdrop of China-generated North Korea nuclear flashpoint makes a Japanese nuclear weapons arsenal "Inescapable" for Japan's survival as an Emerged Power.

Commencing with my first SAAG Paper of 2002 (Reproduced as Annexure to this Paper) this Author has been periodically pleading that a strong case exists for Japan to acquire nuclear weapons. Besides repeating Japan's nuclear weapons imperative in all my writings thereafter reviewing Japan's security challenges, this Author again wrote a detailed SAAG Paper No.1947 dated 12.09.2006 titled "Japan's Renewed Imperatives for Nuclear Weapons: An Analysis."

Japan's imperatives in 2017 to go in for a nuclear weapons arsenal arise from multiple pressing imperatives, not only geopolitical and strategic but also from Japan's inherent compulsions and status as an Emerged Power in Asia along with India for balance of power reasons when China's threatening military rise in Asia is taken into account.

While India as an Asian Emerged Power has stood upto China's provocative military brinkmanship on the strength of her nuclear weapons and ICBM arsenal capable of hitting Beijing, it the lack of a nuclear weapons arsenal in Japan's armoury limits Japan's stature in Chinese perceptions as an Emerged Power, otherwise equal to China.

In 2017, Japan needs no lessons on the imperatives of a nuclear weapons arsenal than to learn from North Korea. The United States is temporising with China and North Korea only because in 2017 North Korea with Chinese comprehensive technological and financial assistance has added nuclear weapons and ICBMs arsenal neutralising United States 'compellence capabilities' against North Korea.

In similar fashion, Japan which ever since the early 1980s has been only a 'screw driver' 'turn away from possession of a nuclear weapons arsenal, should now operationalise her nuclear weapons arsenal and missiles arsenal to achieve 'dissuasion' of China's political and military coercion against it.

Japan in recent years since the ascension to power of President Xi Jinping in Beijing has been subjected to political and military coercion by China—notably, over the Senkaku Islands and China's unilateral declaration of a Chinese ADIZ over the East China Sea maritime expanse contiguous to Japan.

In 2017, Japan faces daunting odds wherein North Korea without any restraint imposed on it by China as its nuclear weapons patron and supplier and Russia having some leverage on North Korea joins China in similar fashion, just to extract geopolitical leverages against the United States. China is using its nuclear proxy North Korea to inveigle the United States into a serious armed conflict in North East Asia without the onus of having to shoulder the responsibility of triggering a nuclear conflict.

Foreseen in my Papers in the last decade is the inevitability of a serious US-China Military Conflict wherein a non-nuclear weapons Japan gets automatically draw-in with devastating consequences. The geopolitical tussle between United States and China is also examined in my book 'China-India Military Confrontation: 21st Century Perspectives'.

In the past I have questioned the credibility of the United States "Nuclear Umbrella" assured to Japan. In 2017, the credibility of the same is under strain where US President Trump despite strong warnings to North Korea and China has been unable to restrain North Korea or China.

On the contrary, US President Trump has clubbed his November 2017 visit to US Allies Japan and North Korea with a visit to China. Perceptively, in my assessment this decision of President Trump perceptively indicates that the United States is willing to kow-tow to the Chinese President. In the past too US Presidents have bowed to China's sensitivities going much against the national security interests of Japan.

With such political indicators what is the guarantee that the United States would have the WILL TO USE US POWER when the chips are actually down against a provocative North Korea or a coercive China? Will the United States stand with Japan when North Korea and China pose nuclear-tipped ICBMs to the American East Coast?

This eventuality prompted me to conclude the 2002 Paper with the following observations: "No nation can afford to mortgage its national

security interests to the defence policies of another nation, however powerful that may be. Japan's strategic vulnerabilities and its volatile security environment provide adequate justification to acquire nuclear weapons capability to safeguard its existence. Japan should not worry about international reactions in this regard. The maximum outcry could come from China. For China and other major powers, Japan has a very simple answer, 'Gommen Nasai' (Sorry) and 'Sumimassen; (but excuse me). You too have nuclear weapons for your security, why not Japan?

Japanese public opinion needs to be educated against the very potent China Threat against Japan with the force-multiplier effect of China nuclear proxy of China. Senior politicians in Japan have foreseen this imperative and articulated opinions accordingly.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate that can the Japanese people overlook China's propensity for demanding endless humiliating Japanese apologies for Second War so-called war crimes. It is that impulse which in 2017 will impel China to humiliate Japan militarily to 'avenge wrongs historically committed against China'

. Japan's urgent materialisation of a nuclear weapons arsenal will not only ensure the protection of Japan's sovereignty and 'National Honour' against the China Threat but also ensure Asian peace and security.

(Dr Subhash Kapila is a graduate of the Royal British Army Staff College, Camberley and combines a rich experience of Indian Army, Cabinet Secretariat, and diplomatic assignments in Bhutan, Japan, South Korea and USA. Currently, Consultant International Relations & Strategic Affairs with South Asia Analysis Group. He can be reached at drsubhashkapila.007@gmail.com [1])

Annexure

Paper no. 487 05. 07. 2002

JAPAN'S IMPERATIVES FOR NUCLEAR WEAPONS ARSENAL: An Analysis

by Dr. Subhash Kapila

Japan is the only country in the world to have been subjected to a nuclear weapons holocaust, not once but twice, in the closing stages of the Second World War. Hiroshima and Nagasaki are painful reminders of the American nuclear attacks in 1945. It is but natural that Japan as a nation has a strong aversion to nuclear weapons.

Japan's imperatives to possess a nuclear weapons capability or arsenal came briefly into focus in June 2002, when a high Japanese official articulated the need. However, it was promptly denied within the next two three days that there were no changes in Japan's defence policies.

Notwithstanding the above, two questions arise in this context. First, would Japan have ever been subjected to nuclear weapons bombing, had it also possessed nuclear weapons i.e. nuclear deterrence? Second, is it strategically wise for Japan to continue renunciation of nuclear weapons capability in the context of its security environment?

Arising from the above, this paper attempts to analyze the strategic and political imperatives for Japan to acquire a nuclear weapons capability.

Japan's Strategic Imperatives for a Nuclear Weapons Arsenal: Japan's imperatives for a nuclear weapon's capability were born the day it was subjected to nuclear weapons attacks in 1945. The volatility of its security environment emerged soon after the United States Occupation of Japan when the Korean War erupted as a result of the Cold War super-power clash of interests in the region. The Korean War was on the brink of a nuclear conflagration.

Japan's imperatives for a nuclear weapons capability became latent due to the 'nuclear umbrella' assured by the United States during the Cold War. But, it is my belief that while the imperatives may not have been in public focus or debate, the question stood reviewed periodically. Japan's strategic imperatives for a nuclear weapons capability are best concluded by answers to the following questions:

- * Does Japan's historical strategic experience justify non-possession of nuclear weapons?
- * Is the United States' nuclear umbrella' to Japan leak proof?
- * Has the North East Asian security environment acquired peaceful contours that encourage Japan to justify non-possession of nuclear weapons?

Japan's historical strategic experience, irrespective of any other factor suggesting non-possession of nuclear weapons should promote it to recognize the strategic imperatives for possession of a credible nuclear deterrent. Japan would never have been subjected to a nuclear holocaust, had it possessed a nuclear deterrence. For Japan to argue that it is a peaceful country and therefore unlikely to be drawn into nuclear conflict or nuclear blackmail is strategically untenable. It is peaceful nations that invite aggression. Peaceful nations need deterrence too, especially in a hostile neighbourhood.

The United States' nuclear umbrella' for Japan is not leak-proof. It can develop many leaks as a result of:

- * Changes in United States strategic postures in Asia-Pacific region

- * United States' policies towards China
- * United States' domestic constraints
- * Prevailing global security environment

Japan therefore has an imperative requirement to provide its own 'nuclear umbrella' for its national security.

The post-Cold War era has not brought any peace dividends to North East Asia. On the contrary, Japan's security environment has become more threatening and complex due to:

- * China's upgradation of its nuclear and conventional military capabilities
- * China's predilection to challenge American military pre-dominance in the Asia Pacific
- * North Korea's nuclear and missile capabilities build-up as China's proxy
- * Russia's strategic devaluation and consequently its counter vailing capability in the region.

All these suggest that not only Japan's security environment has become more threatening, but Japan is the only major power in Asia Pacific which does not possess nuclear weapons, essential for its security.

Strategic imperatives therefore exist to justify Japan's acquisition of a nuclear weapons capability. A Japanese independent nuclear weapons capability would provide both strategic and political stability in Asia Pacific.

Japan's Political Imperatives for a Nuclear Weapon's Capability: The currency of power for both global and regional power status today is nuclear weapons capability. Japan is not only a major regional power but also an economic superpower. Yet all this means nothing if Japan cannot add the muscle of power to the content of its foreign policies.

Japan also seeks to become a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, rightly so. Yet, Japan, as a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, would be the only member without nuclear weapons capability. A permanent member of the UN Security Council carries with it a 'power connotation', which Japan can only acquire with a nuclear weapons capability.

Japan's political and economic status and its attendant considerations provide additional imperatives to Japan's strategic imperatives for a nuclear weapons capability.

Conclusion: No nation can afford to mortgage its national security interests to the defence policies of another nation, however powerful that may be. Japan's strategic vulnerabilities and its volatile security environment provide adequate justification to acquire nuclear weapons capability to safeguard its existence. Japan should not worry about international reactions in this regard. The maximum outcry could come from China. For China, and the other major powers, Japan has a very simple answer: 'Gommen Nasai' (sorry) and 'Sumimasen' (but excuse me), you too have nuclear weapons for your security, so why not Japan?

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