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The white paper, titled “China’s National Defence in 2000”, aims to “express the Chinese people’s sincere aspiration for peace and to help the rest of the world better understand China’s national policy and its efforts for the modernisation of its national defence”. But in practice, both in the international and regional environments, the Chinese behaviours profoundly carry a long history of policy of “*mystery and fear*”. As a matter of fact, while other major international actors do also act with several ambiguities in dealing with *real politik agendas*, an emerging power state like India needs a close understanding of the upcoming international complexities and the associated Chinese responses.

By the dawn of a new century, the *atoms for peace*, in course of time, renounced its humane face. Forgot to keep its promises and turned towards the greed for power and more power in international arena. Subsequently, with the advancement in science and technology, nuclear power programmes achieved universality in its inherent spectacular political power potential. Now it is being acknowledged as the most effective *bargaining chip* of international negotiations. And China could be called its best user both during and after the cold war world. In such circumstances, India also needs a better participation in the debates going on “holding of nuclear power”.

Till date, New Delhi is opposed to NPT and CTBT arrangements that draw international attention on Indian endeavours towards achieving “*credible minimum nuclear deterrence*”. As a matter of concern, today, India has been facing a unique kind of threat from the two neighbouring states with considerable nuclear strength. At no other part of the world such uniqueness is found in international insecurity

dynamics. The major task ahead for India is to follow a two pronged defence approach - One- to keep on the security and threat perceptions closely monitored with matching defence build up, - Two- to convince the nuclear weapon states that the existing ambiguities in the global nuclear regime are uncalled for in a nuclear weapon free world.

India perceives the present global nuclear regime as discriminatory, inequitable and non-transparent. As far as the P-5 countries (U.S.A, Russia, Britain, France and China) are concerned, they uphold the philosophy of maintaining “strategic stability” to the global security environment. This common aim to maintain strategic stability leaves enormous scope for maintaining P-5’s nuclear strongholds in future. Of course, the end of cold war and the subsequent acceptance that a nuclear war could not be won and must not be fought have little bearing on the “no-changers”.

Today, the attitude and justification of the erstwhile super powers as well as China reflect the same cold war underpinnings of mutual distrust and international permutations of national self-interests. For reasons best known to them, even the advocates of nuclear disarmament and arms control in the west prescribe a limit (through START negotiations to reduce the number of deployment of strategic nuclear weapons by 1000) which (the limit) is itself silent to answer the questions like – against Whom? Why? How long? And does it have anything at hand to immediately show that P-5 states are really interested in complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the earth? Therefore, prescription of any self defining limit to nuclear weapons and at the same time frowning on the new nuclear tests as of Indian, is the ambiguity of today’s global nuclear policy-making. This is to be boldly addressed at all international forums. No doubt, the pursuit of “*real politik*” is inherent in all national policy agendas, but then who is to guarantee the security safeguards for economically backward and militarily weak states?

Measuring the economic and military strength under the vibrant democratic governance, the USA has taken the role of global ethics and policing after the disintegration of the Soviet Union. Along with the close allies and NATO while it wants to broaden and redefine its role in the new millennium, Washington is showing reluctance in debating “no first use (NFU)” policy for nuclear weapons and it still carries faith in the old cold war policy of “*extended deterrence*”. Even, its refusal to adopt NFU for NATO sends wrong signal to both its friends and allies, which in turn opens the scope for untenable security dialogues between nuclear weapons states (NWS) and non-nuclear weapons states (NNWS). Washington is already in hot pursuit of a new ballistic missile defence (BMD) strategy. Much to the worry, globally criticized act of the U.S senate’s failure to ratify CTBT has further put Washington’s fidelity to Article VI of NPT under suspicion.

Second, Russia – still having a huge stockpile of nuclear weapons but economically shattered, still holds the strongest challenging position to U.S nuclear policies. The Russian Duma took considerable time to ratify START II in the backdrop of existing shadow of the cold war in the country. The Russian belief that the ambiguous U.S stances and its confrontational approach with reference to NATO expansion coupled with its projection of moral superiority against Russian Federation and former Warsaw Pact member countries, in fact, create opacity between U.S and Russian understanding on international affairs. Its externalities have serious ramifications in future as the Russia’s nuclear arsenal along with its command and control infrastructure is in deteriorating condition. It is assumed that 70 percent of Russia’s early warning satellites are either past their designed operational life or in serious disrepair and 58 percent of Russia’s ballistic missiles are well

past their operational life span. Ageing early warning radar may erroneously indicate nuclear attack by the U.S. Further, the so called pilferage of nuclear know-how technologies and fissile material into the wrong hands from the idle personnel of shut down nuclear facilities in Russia have larger international implications.

Even in such volatile circumstances, neither the U.S nor Russia has been willing to expedite any treaty negotiations and their implementations. Instead, the gulf between these two countries is widening in recent years over the issues like NATO expansion, Theatre missile defences, transfer of nuclear technologies, Kosovo, and Chechnya. And all these factors together have jeopardized any resolve on Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty between the two countries. More or less both of them are hesitating to take the lead on any disarmament issue.

Third, China (being an important component of global policy-making on nuclear weapons), instead of refraining from further nuclear armament, has been forthrightly justifying retention or modernization of its nuclear forces. Though it has its credit for signing NPT and consenting for CTBT, even after the conclusion of NPT-1995, it conducted nuclear tests towards the end of CTBT negotiations with scant regard for world opinion. Despite espousing a “no use” (against NNWS) and a “no first use”(against NNWS) policies, China probably relies more on the position of *“limited deterrence* (to have enough capabilities to deter conventional, theatre and strategic nuclear war, and control and suppress escalation during a nuclear war). Till now China has not participated in arms control negotiations like START. Though, high in principled lip services, it has been maintaining an ambiguous position on comprehensive nuclear disarmament issues. More so, China’s prime intention is to see the US and Russia to cut down their stock sizes through legally bound treaties to a level to match own holdings and simultaneously seek to cap and roll back India's nuclear and missile programmes. Also, China with its stronger nuclear holdings tries to dominate the Asian affairs. Though the last mile is still too long for both the US and Russia in cutting their nuclear stock sizes, the US definitely would think otherwise to keep China engaged elsewhere. As far as Chinese intention towards India is concerned, China would rely more on the inter-national rituals rather than genuinely endorsing the Indian grievances.

Fourth, like China, the UK and France have shown little interest in joining any arms reduction dialogue. Despite being a party to NPT, after the NPT REC 1995 France broke its moratorium to conduct a series of nuclear tests. However, later it ratified the CTBT. The future response of these two nations depend more on the US agenda because on most of the international issues they share the same view against Russia, former Soviet allies or for that matter against China.

Finally, in the South Asian regional environment, the adversaries not separately but jointly act against India. Pakistan has been acting and responding to the Chinese meticulous inter-national plans quite swiftly. Since long, China has recklessly been providing with nuclear and missile technology to Pakistan. In fact, Pakistan has been behaving in a manner that definitely exceeds its strategic defence requirements. Even in past, India has faced belligerent behaviour of both its neighbours- China and Pakistan. This has been raising the prospect of an arms race breaking out between India and China.

The compulsions ahead:

China along with the other P-5 states themselves is openly pursuing a vertical trend in nuclear armament. At the same time, they criticize the Indian efforts towards achieving even “credible minimum nuclear deterrence”. The official version of Indian defence build up is not devoid of its global mission of complete elimination of nuclear weapons from the earth. This two-track policy approach is perhaps the reflection of the deceptions posed by the P-5 states that New Delhi goes through. India's opposition to the NPT and CTBT based on the argument of these arrangements being discriminatory, inequitable, non transparent; and; non compliant to any time-frame, kept India out of the NPT Review Conference 2000 at New York. Also, south Asian security environment is not clearly conducive to Indian peace and tranquility. Despite periodical denials of a nexus against India by both China and Pakistan, the reality speaks something not supportive to Indian foreign policy interests. And to face the realities of new international security dynamics, India needs to come out of its mental blockade on openness in defence desires and aspirations. But all it needs in time is clarity of thought on long term goals and the national interest perspectives. After all, India has along way to go fighting against such unjust and inequitable orders.

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