

# Nuclearization of the Subcontinent and Iran's Security

Seyed Kazem Sajjadpour\*  
Maedeh Karimi Ghohroudi\*\*

## Abstract

Major nuclear tests by India and Pakistan in 1998 changed the face of the region strategically. This development along with continued tensions in relations between India and Pakistan, developments in U.S. relations with India make the study of the consequences of the two countries' nuclear program indispensable. This research will try to examine the implications of nuclear tests by India and Pakistan for the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran. The research will show that Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests initially internationalized security environment in Iran's eastern region. It also concludes that the region has become less secure as a result of the tests, further heightening international pressures on Iran's nuclear program.

**Keywords:** Nuclearization, India, Pakistan, Nuclear Policy, National Security, Islamic Republic of Iran

---

\* Associate Professor, School of International Relations in Tehran (smksajjad@sir.ac.ir)

\*\* PhD candidate of Iranian Studies, Tehran University  
(Received: 28 June 2012 - Accepted: 10 September 2012)

### **Introduction**

Nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998 marked the beginning of a new age of strategic calculations and considerations in Iran's eastern region. Their nuclear tests are considered to be a turning point in regional security developments as well as one of the major challenges to the international security. Iran is located at the vicinity of the Indian Subcontinent and cannot be afar from the region's security developments including the repercussions of the militarization of Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs. Deepening tensions between India and Pakistan and gradual change in U.S. strategic relations with the two countries on the one hand and absence of a thorough study of the implications of nuclear tests in the Subcontinent for Iran, this article tries to assess security and nuclear tensions between the two nations following the nuclear tests. It seeks to answer the question how the repercussion of Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests for the national security of the Islamic Republic can be analyzed. In order to answer this question, at least three relevant questions should be proposed for which suitable answers have to be provided: First, what has been the nature of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs and how did they evolve? Second, how can the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests be analyzed from the perspective of the theories concerning the proliferation of nuclear weapons and what practical consequences have they had? Third, how have the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests and their bilateral, regional and international dimensions affected the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran? The three sections of the paper address these



questions respectively. Findings of this article will elaborate Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests have created tension in Iran's eastern region, further internationalizing it. In other words, Iran's security environment has become more insecure and more internationalized.

### **I- Nature of Indian and Pakistani Nuclear Programs**

A study of the nature Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs is possible through a glance at the history of the two countries' nuclear developments. The United States of America and the Soviet Union acquired nuclear weapons in 1945 and 1949 respectively. With a short interval, Great Britain, France and China acquired nuclear bombs in 1952, 1960 and 1964. With the formation of the nuclear club and the recognition of these five states as nuclear powers, efforts were made at preventing other states from seeking atomic bombs. New Delhi, however, declared in May 1998 that it had conducted five underground nuclear tests. Islamabad also conducted five nuclear tests in Baluchistan province in Chagai Hills on May 28, 1998. (Ganguly and Hagerty, 2005: 124-125). Pakistan conducted another test in the region on May 30 (Kerr and Nikitin, 2008: 2). Pakistan claimed that it had conducted five tests as a response to India's five recent tests and another one as a response to India's peaceful nuclear test in 1974 (Sagan and Waltz, 2003: 88).

**Development of India's Nuclear Program:** Indian nuclear program began in the Bahabha Atomic Research Center in Trombay; a center which took shape according to the U.S. Atoms for Peace Program. The first Indian reactor was the Research Reactor Aspara constructed with the British assistance in 1955. A year later, India also imported a modern heavy water reactor from Canada for which the United States pledged to provide heavy water. Furthermore, the United States helped India construct and fuel the Tarapur reactors (Charnysh (A), 2009: 1). By the mid-1960s, India advocated peaceful nuclear energy, but three factors including China's nuclearization, India-Pakistan disputes and search for world prestige and status



encouraged India to seek nuclear weapons. India's defeat by China in a war in 1962 and China's nuclearization in 1964 are also seen as factors that led India down this path. U.S. and the Soviet rejection of India's demand for security guarantee vis-à-vis China also caused India to feel constrained versus China, the United States and the Soviet Union (Shinichi and Marie, 2003: 61). India-Pakistan disputes since Indian independence and Pakistan's secession from India in 1947 particularly concerning the Jammu and Kashmir province and wars in 1948, 1961 and 1971, the 1983-84 crisis and "Operation Brasstacks," which was a military exercise conducted by India in 1987, was the second factor that provided India with the impetus for nuclearization (Shinichi and Marie, 2003: 62). Meanwhile, India was concerned about Chinese aids to Pakistan in transferring nuclear technology, material and weapons (Shinichi and Marie, 2003: 63). The third factor was search for establishing its status as a regional power, elevating international prestige and autonomy in decision-making at the global scene. India's Acquisition of nuclear weapons is viewed as one of the prerequisites for permanent membership at the UN Security Council. With the nationalists' rise to power in India in the 1980s, this approach was pursued (Charnysh (A), 2009: 2), whereas for Pakistan, countering and nuclear deterrence vis-à-vis India has been the main factor in acquiring nuclear weapons (Kerr and Nikitin, 2008: 1).

In 1974, India conducted its first nuclear test, labeled as a peaceful nuclear explosion. As a result of the explosion, the United States imposed restrictions on India respecting nuclear material and technology and Canada stopped helping Indian nuclear program. With Indira Gandhi's coming to power, India's nuclear program was followed more extensively. Originally India sought to develop its missile program and by 1996, it built a nuclear warhead that possessed the capability of carrying Prithvi-1 missile (Charnysh (A), 2009: 2).

**Pakistan's Nuclear Program:** Pakistan's pursuit of peaceful nuclear energy was also initiated following Islamabad's participation



in the U.S. Plan of Atoms for Peace. In 1955, the Pakistani government formed a 12-member Atomic Energy Committee to advise the government on the peaceful uses of atomic energy and signed an agreement on nuclear cooperation with the United States (Charnysh (B), 2009: 1). But disputes between India and Pakistan, the 1965 war with India over Kashmir resulting in Pakistan's defeat and India's first nuclear test in 1974 strengthened Pakistan's determination to acquire its own nuclear arsenal (Charnysh (B), 2009: 1). In 1972, Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto gathered high-ranking Pakistani nuclear scientists in Multan, ordering them to build a nuclear bomb (Delavarpour Aghdam, 2008). With Abdul Qadeer Khan's return to Pakistan from the Netherlands, Pakistani nuclear program received a boost in response to India's proliferation policies. As the father of Pakistan's nuclear bomb, Abdul Qadeer Khan worked for a contractor at the European URENCO enrichment consortium in the early 1970s who returned to his home country with Ali Bhutto's demand in 1976 (Cronin et al., 2005: 12). He stole the centrifuge designs and used the knowledge acquired in the West to develop Pakistan's nuclear bomb (Charnysh (B), 2009: 1). In an interview with an Indian journalist in 1987, he admitted that Pakistan had the capability to produce nuclear weapons (Charnysh (B), 2009: 2). Thus, after India conducted its nuclear test in May 1998, Pakistan also proceeded to have a nuclear test in the same month; consequently India and Pakistan joined the club of owners of nuclear bombs.

After 1998, both India and Pakistan continued to develop their nuclear programs. The 2001 Defense Department Review of Proliferation Threats indicated that Indian and Pakistani strategic programs were continuing given their simultaneous efforts as the two states were in a period of intensified missile development and nuclear weapons; it can be labeled as 'slow nuclear rivalry' (Feickert and Kronstadt, 2003: 7). India clearly referred to "credible minimum nuclear deterrence" in its draft nuclear doctrine released in 1999 as it



maintained the use of limited conventional war, because minimum deterrence is a dynamic concept which depends upon the security environment; hence the possibility of developing nuclear program will remain (Shinichi and Marie, 2003: 68). Ballistic missile tests in 1999 and 2003 demonstrated such dynamism (Shinichi and Marie, 2003: 7). Such progress continued to such a degree that India launched its first nuclear-powered submarine on July 27, 2009 (Charnysh (A), 2009: 5). In the meantime, Pakistan has adopted the first use policy (Sokolski, 2009: 27-28). In order to preserve this policy towards other countries particularly India, Pakistan needs to maintain the process of development for its nuclear program. Members of the U.S. Congressional Research Service Andrew Feickert and Alan Kronstadt believe that India possesses between 30 and 35 and Pakistan possesses between 24 and 48 nuclear weapons (Feickert and Kronstadt, 2003: 11-12).

With the creation of the nuclear club and the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT), it was expected that no other country would acquire atomic bomb, but Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons produced a significant change in the region and the international system, making theorization necessary given the new dimensions of the nuclear question. The process of militarization of Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs made it clear that although they have been defined vis-à-vis each other, their repercussions go beyond their mutual relations given the place of such programs in the context of international strategic relationships and the special sensitivity of the Subcontinent region. How can Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests be analyzed? In order to answer the question, first these tests will be assessed through the lens of theories related to development of nuclear weapons and then their practical consequences will be evaluated.

Considering Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests were the first nuclear tests beyond the five-member nuclear club, theorists of international strategic questions were encouraged to react. In this



regard, Kenneth Waltz's theory regarding deterrence of nuclear weapons by explaining Indian and Pakistani nuclear question vis-à-vis Scott Sagan's theory relating to the threatening nature of nuclear weapons. In the early 1980s, as the strategic East-West relations prevailed, Kenneth Waltz presented his deterrence theory within the framework of optimist theories in detail (Sridharan, 2007: 240). As a neo-realist theoretician, Waltz emphasized the structural purpose for the possession of nuclear arms. According to the theory, states are rational actors bound to seek nuclear weapons in the international system in order to safeguard their security and deter potential enemies. In his analysis, Waltz advocates proliferation (Baylis and Smith, 2009: 948-949). The proliferation of nuclear weapons would lead to the enhancement of deterrence, peace and stability.

In contrast, the theory of dangers of nuclear weapons proliferation, within the framework of pessimist theories, holds that the availability of nuclear weapons at the hands of the states would result in world instability. Professor of political science, Scott Sagan, has developed a theory which says further proliferation of nuclear weapons would not bring stability, but would further endanger the existing world stability (Asgarkhani, 2002: 119). He maintains that "the states that will acquire nuclear arms in the future will be most likely governed by the military or will have weak civilian governments, lacking positive and restrictive civilian control mechanisms" (Baylis and Smith, 2009: 950). Therefore, the threat of nuclear weapons will increase. Associate Professor in the Department of National Security Affairs at the US Naval Postgraduate School, Paul Kapur, believes that a mix of dissatisfaction with territorial boundaries, weakness of conventional military strength and military weapons will create instability (Ganguly and Kapur, 2010: 31-32). This theory has been developed after Indian and Pakistani nuclearization. Another theory that was reinforced after the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests has been Glen Snyder's Stability-Instability Paradox according to which mutual deterrence of nuclear weapons at the strategic level makes



resort to force and instability possible at the lower levels. Therefore, limited conventional wars and proxy wars will be likely to break out (Ganguly and Kapur, 2010: 135).

None of the aforementioned theories indicates all aspects of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear programs, because both deterrence and stability-instability paradox theories see stability at the strategic level as definite. This is not the case regarding Indo-Pakistan relations, because there is a possibility of use of nuclear weapons intentionally or accidentally. There are four cases for the use of nuclear weapons: 1- Inadvertent use of nuclear arms as a result of the pressure during the crisis or war; 2- Unauthorized use of nuclear weapons by the military commanders without the consent of political leaders; 3- Nuclear accidents; and 4- Loss or theft and subsequent use of nuclear devices by the terrorists (Sridharan, 2007: 268). According to Sagan's theory, the possibility of use of nuclear weapons is higher in Pakistan because of powerful presence of the military in political affairs. Besides, the deterrence theories have ignored the role of non-state actors, considering only the states in possession of nuclear bombs. To limit the threat of such weapons to military governments is flawed, because Pakistan's nuclear weapons, due to the presence of military governments and the influence of the military under the civilian governments, can be dangerous, yet there is uncertainty about India. Kapur's theory is refuted in case of nuclear dissatisfaction and possession of conventional military power, whereas the military arms per se are tension-generating and every state's acquisition of the weapons would exacerbate its dangerous consequences. As will be seen, in spite of the prevailing approach regarding the applicability of the deterrence theory developed by Waltz, the theory cannot explain the implications of the Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons. A glance at the outcome of India and Pakistan's acquisition of the nuclear bombs will indicate this fact.

The impact of the Indian and Pakistani states' possession of the atomic bomb has been widespread, influencing various levels of the





bilateral relations to the region and the international system. The consequences of Indian and Pakistani nuclearization cannot be reduced to the mere presence of a military government as the military presence in the government is limited. Territorial disputes between India and Pakistan and Indian superiority in conventional weapons, moreover, will raise the possibility of confrontation and threats of their nuclearization. The threatening factor, however, is not nuclear weapons, but nuclear weapons are inherently tension-producing and troublesome. The effects of the nuclear weapons can be summarized in the following cases: 1- Advancing the goals in the Kashmir cause through a military solution; 2- Challenging the bilateral India-Afghanistan and Pakistan-Afghanistan relations; 3- Rising India-Pakistan rivalry in Afghanistan and subsequent crisis-making in the country; and 4- Continued proxy wars in the region with the support for nongovernmental groups allied with the Indian and Pakistani governments. These are manifested in declared policies and nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan.

**First.** Nuclear India and Pakistan have adopted “credible minimum deterrence” as their official policy. According to this policy, deterrence is realized with the capability to strike a blow to the enemy in the event of an attack (Sridharan, 2007: 213). India has claimed that it would not use nuclear weapons against the non-nuclear states or states that have not cooperated with the nuclear powers and would not threaten them with the use of nuclear weapons. Nonetheless, minimum deterrence is not clear in the Indian doctrine and it is more consistent with the traditional deterrence (Rajain, 2008: 228-230); either it has not been explained in any of the statements issued by the country so far (Sridharan, 2007: 129). Only when asked by the Rajya Sabha (the Upper House), the Indian Foreign Minister observed that India’s minimum deterrence would not be defined under fixed conditions, but it was a policy that would be determined in their security environment. The government has further declared that issues related to the defense situation are not subject to negotiation



(Rajian, 2008: 230). India has preserved the possibility of limited war after nuclearization as the Indian Special Forces engaged in hostilities in which full military hostilities did not occur, and were in a level lower than conventional warfare in terms of intensity and use of forces. India has called them limited war under the nuclear condition where it is possible to turn into full-fledged conventional war (Sridharan, 2007: 193). Therefore, as a nuclear power, Pakistan can be the target of India's attacks in its nuclear doctrine as a limited war with the country can break out.

Pakistan lacks a written nuclear doctrine, but Director of Plan Division of the Pakistani Nuclear Command Structure Lieutenant General Khalid Kidwai views Pakistan's redlines for use of nuclear weapons as follows: India attacks Pakistan, occupying a large portion of its territory, India destroys a large part of the Pakistani territory or air force; Pakistan is encircled in such a way that transportation of vital material becomes impossible, impacting the country's war capacity; and if India brings Pakistan into political instability or widespread domestic sabotage (Liebl, 2009: 15). Two issues were informally declared by the Pakistani military: India passes the control line in such a way that threatens the Pakistani-controlled Kashmir or India attacks the Pakistani nuclear facilities (Liebl, 2009: 157). Besides, Pakistan has adopted the first use policy. Therefore, the elements of Pakistan's nuclear policy include India-centrism, first use policy, mutual retaliation, and targeting the nuclear counterpart (Liebl, 2009: 157).

To preserve the possibility of conventional war in every condition and nuclear war in special conditions, retaliatory actions and targeting the adversary from both parties (i.e. India and Pakistan) constitute the nuclear doctrines of India and Pakistan. In other words, after India and Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons, efforts at securing Indian and Pakistani interests through military solutions have not been left aside and the nuclear arms have increased their adverse security consequences. As it is witnessed, the persistence of the



possibility of a conventional war and nuclear attack if the adversary does it would contradict deterrence policy pursued by Pakistan and India as deterrence is valid just in theory.

In practice, India and Pakistan have continued to target each other since 1998. After Mumbai was attacked in 2008, the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh indicated that “the precision and sophistication of the operations show that the attack enjoyed the support of certain state institutions” (Rabasa et al., 2009: 15). He also remarked that if it were proved that these attacks were related to the neighboring country, it had to pay the costs (Tashpinar, 2010). Indian and Pakistani aggressive diplomacy is not limited to the critical periods, but has continued in periods of tranquility too. India accuses Pakistan of sponsoring terrorist groups and Pakistan views India as provoking separatist movements such as the Baluchs.

Indeed, military moves have further disrupted India-Pakistan relations. After the Indian parliament was attacked in 2001, India mobilized its forces for around 10 months through October 2002. The Washington Post reported that the Indian Navy carrying aerial equipment, six vessels and two submarines had been stationed afar from the Karachi Port (Dossani and Rowen, 2005: 307). Conditions short of war were seen in May 2002 and other countries recalled their diplomatic agents from their embassies in Islamabad and New Delhi (Sridharan, 2007: 254). Thus, Indian and Pakistani nuclear weapons have made the countries more assertive in generating crisis and conflict even in the region. After nuclearization, India and Pakistan defined objectives for themselves in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The Hindu ruler of this region with a Muslim majority declared its accession to India in 1947, which gave rise to the India-Pakistan disputes over the region (Burke and Zayering, 1998: 20-23). A little while after the nuclear tests, in 1999 the Kargil crisis started with Pakistan’s military invasion of Garkhun in the Kargil area in Kashmir (Ganguly and Hagerty, 2005: 143). During the crisis, Pakistan crossed the control line in the Kargil area between 8 and 12 kilometers deep



in Jammu and Kashmir (Kapoor, 2005: 138). For the first time after the 1971 war, India used its air force against Pakistan during the crisis (Ganguly and Hagerty, 2005: 143). Pakistan also stationed missiles that meant they were ready to be launched (Feickert and Kronstadt, 2003: 13). In the war, a nuclear element existed and the report released by the Kargil Review Committee revealed that Pakistan's official and unofficial spokespersons tried to transmit implicit nuclear threats to the Indian leaders (Sridharan, 2007: 191-192). During the 7-week Kargil War, India and Pakistan threatened to embark in nuclear war 13 times (Dudley and Jenkins, 2003: 38). Therefore, the rise of limited conventional conflicts, proxy wars and the possibility of use of nuclear weapons have heightened distrust between India and Pakistan.

**Second.** One of the consequences of Indian and Pakistani nuclear arms is the possibility of using them by the extremist groups. Such extremist groups (the Taliban, al-Qaida and Wahhabis) see India as part of the Christian-Jewish-Hindu axis and an enemy of Islam (Rabasa et al., 2009: 1). Since these groups do not act on a specific territory, they are not concerned about the use of nuclear weapons against themselves. Hence, by instigating instability, they provide the grounds for their acquisition of nuclear weapons, leading to nuclear terrorism. Under the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, nuclear terrorism refers to use or threat to use nuclear facilities and material in order to kill or harm human beings (United Nations, 2005: 3-4).

In 1998, Bin Laden declared that Muslims were bound to acquire weapons of mass destruction. Al-Qaida received a religious verdict (fatwa) from a Saudi Mufti Nasir al-Fahd in May 2003 justifying the use of nuclear weapons (Larssen, 2008). During the years, al-Qaida has established links with the Uzbek terrorist groups, Pakistan's Tahrik-e Taliban, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Haqqani Network (Jan, 2011).

Efforts made by these groups in order to acquire nuclear and



radioactive weapons and material have given rise to domestic instability in these countries. Bradford University Professor Shaun Gregory believes that the paramilitaries have attacked Pakistan's nuclear facilities three times since 2007 (Charnysh (B), 2009: 6). Nuclear terrorism not only can exacerbate bilateral relations of the states, but also brings tension into the region. Acquiring nuclear and radioactive arms, the extremist groups change the state-centered international structure. If terrorists decide to use nuclear weapons, the consequences will be catastrophic.

**Third.** By their actions, India and Pakistan challenged the international system as well. Their nuclear arms have had two major consequences: first, the international non-proliferation regime has been undermined, diminishing the states' confidence. Consequently, cooperation among states for countering nuclear weapons has decreased. Second, nuclear proliferation, and trade in nuclear weapons and technology have resulted in their expansion in the world. When India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in 1998, neither party was a signatory to the NPT; thus they did not breach any international convention (Meier: 8). Though the NPT has not been violated, it has become useless and its *raison d'être* has been questioned. Now the question is what if other states wish to follow suit or even withdraw from the NPT (Baylis and Smith: 2009: 929). India was expected to be obliged to the NPT provisions, though it did not sign it, because India was among the states that suggested the codification of a comprehensive ban on nuclear tests. In this regard, it is considerable that India received help from the European countries and the United States as Pakistan was assisted by China.

India holds that China and North Korea helped Pakistan build its nuclear weapons (Rajain, 2008: 306). The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reported in April 1996 that China had provided Pakistan with plutonium production techniques and equipment (Javaid, 2006: 307). The agreement on exporting two nuclear reactors to Pakistan was signed during President Asif Ali Zardari's visit to



Beijing in 2008 (IRNA, 2001). Pakistan is also among the few states in the world that proliferate nuclear technology. U.S. investigations in 2004 showed nuclear scientist Abdel Qadeer Khan and at least seven other organizations had transferred nuclear technology and uranium enrichment industry to other countries including North Korea, Iran and Libya (Ali and Khalid, 2006: 78-79).

There is little evidence proving that India has been involved in proliferation. One of the rare cases has been sanctions on two Indian scientists in 2004 by the United States who had transferred nuclear technology (Squassoni, 2006: 6). India has concluded a nuclear cooperation agreement with France and Russia in 2008. Great Britain and India also reached agreement for nuclear technology transfer (Kerr, 2010: 4-5). A strategic partnership agreement was signed between India and the United States in 2004 which was completed in 2005, bringing a fundamental change in U.S. policy towards nuclear India. The agreement, known as the 123 Agreement, was the clearest U.S. act in undermining the non-proliferation regime, leading to lifting of several constraints on export of technology to India. According to the Agreement signed on July 18, 2005, India can purchase nuclear fuel and technology from the United States and is allowed to create strategic stockpile of nuclear fuel in order to use in case of disruption in provision of fuel (Mirza & Sadiq, 2008: 3).

A former Indian intelligence official has emphasized that the Agreement opens India's hand in building 50 nuclear warheads per year. Although civilian facilities have been considered in the Agreement, as David Albright, the founder of the non-governmental Institute for Science and International Security, argued on October 26, 2005 India's military and civilian nuclear programs were interrelated and a number of facilities had both military and civilian dimensions (Mirza & Sadiq, 2008: 3). U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Christina Rocca stated in March 2003 that the United States had adopted a pragmatist approach in order to restrain proliferation in India and Pakistan (Feickert and Kronstadt, 2003: 7).



As such India was identified as a strategic partner and Pakistan as a great non-NATO ally (Hussain: 6). The Agreement has brought about a few implications: 1) Undermining the non-proliferation regime by the United States: In 1999 after India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests, the U.S. Congress opposed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) (Carranza, 2006: 490). According to the NPT, Article 1, the nuclear states must not help other states to develop nuclear weapons and explosion devices, whereas the United States has become obliged to provide enriched uranium to India (Kousha, 2010: 180). 2) Undermining the NPT by others: Other states have been encouraged to conduct nuclear tests, violate the NPT or withdraw from it, whereas the most important goal is to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons to states lacking nuclear arms (Carranza, 2006: 489). 3) Horizontal proliferation by the rivals: U.S. unlawful act in helping India has paved the way for China to assist Pakistan in this respect, because states like China see their security dependent on assisting the friendly states vis-à-vis U.S. power. 4) Search for managing the proliferation system rather than destroying it: The United States has decided to manage nuclear proliferation system rather than destroying it (Desal, 2000: 40). With the India-U.S. Agreement, India gained access to the international nuclear trade (Rajagopalan, 2008: 3). The advocates of the nuclear trade with India believe that this agreement oversees up to 65% of India's nuclear reactors, but it did not restrict India's nuclear weapons program by 65%, rather facilitated it (Green and Sara Franzoni: 6) and 5) Diminished world security at the expense of securing U.S. government's interests: In order to advance its political and diplomatic goals, the United States uses the leverage of nuclear assistance agreements and meets India's nuclear demands. It is exemplified by U.S. pressure on India in order to vote against Iran with regards to its nuclear program. With India's positive vote on the IAEA Board of Directors on referring Iranian case to the UN Security Council in 2006, the U.S. Congress affirmed the nuclear agreement with India. Ten days later President Bush signed it into law



(Tohidi, 2007). Therefore, undermining the non-proliferation regime and the threat of expansion of the adverse effects of Indian and Pakistani acquisition of nuclear weapons have influenced Iran as the neighbor of the South Asian region with international geopolitical and geostrategic characteristics.

## II- Implications for Iran

Iran's geographical location and the country's conditions in terms of level of nuclear capabilities and degree of internationalization have caused the security of the Islamic Republic of Iran undergo changes after the Indian and Pakistani nuclear tests were conducted. These developments can be enumerated in three broad categories of atomization and insecurity in Iran's eastern region, ascending threat of nuclear terrorism, and growing international pressures on Iran which will be addressed in detail.

By 1998, Russia was Iran's only nuclear neighbor, which had both land and water borders with Iran and after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991, it just has water boundaries with the country. Since 1998 onwards, the South Asian region, which is Iran's eastern neighbor, found two nuclear powers, increasing the number of Iran's nuclear neighbors.

Every country's neighbors at the first place and the adjacent areas at the second are the influential factors shaping its foreign policy. Hence, with the nuclearization of India and Pakistan, Iran's foreign policy environment in the region underwent a change. With India's nuclearization, along with Pakistan, Iran expressed its concerns and then Iranian President Mohammad Khatami stated: "We are sorry about what has happened and we are concerned about India's nuclear tests" (Alam, 2004: 534). He also addressed Pakistan saying "We consider your security seriously and understand the situation of our brothers, the Pakistani nation. Pakistan's security as a friendly neighboring state is vital for us. We view your question as extremely important, standing behind you" (Alam, 2004: 534). Iran





maintained that Indian nuclear tests had disrupted the geostrategic and power balance in the region. Hence, Iran welcomed Pakistan's nuclear test. Then Iranian Foreign Minister Kharrazi visited Pakistan in June 1998 and remarked "Now the Muslims have found self-confidence, because a Muslim state knows how to build a bomb" (Alam, 2004: 534). The policy of siding with one party, given the rising distrust between India and Pakistan, challenged Iranian relations with those countries, because Indian and Pakistani nuclear policies were directed at each other as aggressive diplomacy and military actions represented their behavioral pattern after nuclearization.

Iran's security environment became insecure and tense since that time. President Clinton called Kashmir the nuclear inflammation point in 1999 (Bhumitra, 2009: 216), but now the South Asian region can be regarded as the nuclear inflammation area. In addition, Indian and Pakistani nuclearization has reinforced the defense-security dilemma in the region. That is to say, with enhanced Indian and Pakistani military strength, other states try to develop nuclear capabilities in order to strengthen their security. Besides, nuclear weapons are of international dimension, raising concerns for all actors. Hence, it has increased intervention by other actors such as the United States. Under such circumstances, Iran has attempted to preclude the spillover of insecurity to the country and to Iran's bilateral ties with India and Pakistan. For this purpose, it has sought to balance its policies towards India and Pakistan and control their disputes. For this reason, the declared policy of unilateral support for Pakistan regarding the nuclear weapons has been left aside. Each of these two countries, nonetheless, has accused Iran of supporting the other party.

One of the objectives of the extremist groups including the al-Qaida and Taliban includes the annihilation of the Shiism. They believe that after the destruction of the West, all Shias have to be exterminated (Majlesi, 2011: 23). If the extremist groups gain access



to nuclear weapons, Iran will be their first target because of its Shia majority population. Considering its neighborhood with India, Pakistan and Afghanistan as the safe havens for the extremist groups and the existence of nuclear facilities in these countries, Iran has become exposed to direct threat. Moreover, actions of the extremist groups for acquiring nuclear material and weapons and the occurrence of international or accidental nuclear incidents will affect Iran, even though it is not the direct target. Therefore, nuclear terrorism will directly be a threatening factor. From another viewpoint, nuclear terrorism has indirectly undermined Iran's security coefficient, because the West and the United States have portrayed Iran as the sponsor of nuclear terrorism of al-Qaida and the extremist groups, heightening international pressures on Iran. In an interview with the Pakistani newspaper Dawn, Bin Laden had indicated that if the United States used its weapons against his group and colleagues, he would attack the United States with the chemical, nuclear and biological weapons (Bokhari, 2006: 31).

In the Islamic Republic of Iran's discourse, struggle against the western domineering has been followed as a principle and Iran is among the few countries that has consistently resisted western notably U.S. arrogance and pressures. Hence, the United States has tried to portray Iran as sponsoring terrorist groups and nuclear terrorism. Iran has been accused of sponsoring nuclear terrorism envisaged by such extremist groups as the al-Qaida and Taliban. For this reason, Iran has been faced with further constrains in its surrounding.

Indian and Pakistan search for atomic bomb with undermining the non-proliferation regime has put constrains on Iran in a variety of ways. India and Pakistan's failure to join the NPT, the presence of Abdel Qadeer Khan Network in Pakistan and the 123 Agreement between India and the United States with plunging efficiency of the non-proliferation regime have adversely affected Iran's security. As such trust in other states that only seek peaceful nuclear energy has



plummeted. A glance at the process of Iran's acquisition of nuclear technology demonstrates that not only Iran has not pursued the pattern pursued by India and Pakistan, but also it has cooperated with the international system beyond the NPT.

Iran's search for atomic energy began in 1957 with U.S. assistance and the conclusion of an agreement between Iran and the United States. Before the advent of the Islamic Revolution, Germany, France, India, Canada, Great Britain and Australia assisted Iran in the nuclear area (Gharibabadi, 2008: 36-44). Iran's effort was halted after the Revolution and restarted in 1984 as the Isfahan Center for Nuclear Research began operating and Russia volunteered to complete the Bushehr nuclear power plant (Ruth de Boer, 2009: 133). Iran has voluntarily implemented the provisions of the Additional Protocol to the NPT (93+2), but the states have reached the conclusion that NPT does not bar states from nuclearization and actions beyond it have to be undertaken. In 2000, IAEA Director General Mohammed El-Baradei visited Iranian nuclear facilities for the first time and the first resolution on nuclear issue was adopted in 2003 (Delavarpour Aghdam, 2008). In a June 2008 report by the IAEA, it was stipulated that the Agency did not have any information concerning the practical designing or construction of nuclear material of a weapon (Gharibabadi, 2008: 125-126). Indian and Pakistani nuclearization, nonetheless, has unfolded a question of covert nuclear activity, increasing pressure on Iran.

The presence of the Abdel Qadeer Khan Network in Pakistan and concerns about the spread of nuclear weapons to other countries is another issue which has given rise to heightened international, particularly U.S., pressure on Iran. In 2006, India declared that it would agree with referring the Iranian nuclear case to the Security Council, provided that Pakistan's role is considered. Abdel Qadeer Khan should also face Interrogation outside Pakistan. Pakistan's nuclear assistance to Iran started in the 1980s, continuing under Benazir Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif (Alam, 2004: 540). The two parties



signed a peaceful nuclear agreement in 1986 according to which at least six Iranians would be trained at the Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology in Islamabad and Nuclear Studies Institute. Some nuclear related equipment was also exported to Iran in the late 1980s (A.Q. Khan Nuclear Chronology, 2005: 4). It is also claimed that Khan has confessed in an 11-page letter in 2004 to transferring technology and construction design to Iran (Alam, 2004: 541). Hence, Iran was put under further pressure in this regard, too.

The 2005 U.S.-India strategic agreement, moreover, has affected Iran-India relations in two ways. First, the United States has set conditions for Iran in order to agree with the Agreement the most important of which exerting pressure on Iran and objection to its positions. Second, the provisions of the Agreement are detrimental to Iran (Pant, 2011: 62). When adopting the Agreement, the U.S. Congress asked the U.S. administration to ensure Indian vote against Iran in the IAEA. On Iranian nuclear case, India has voted against Iran three times the second of which led to the referring of the case to the UN Security Council in 2006 (Squassoin, 2006, 121). India has also abstained voting in the resolution against Iran in the Human Rights Council in November 2010 (Anonymous, 2010). The United States has further exerted pressure on the Indian companies to refrain from cooperating with Iran in the energy sector (Dadwall, 2010: 9). Pressure was also exerted on India to withdraw from the Peace Pipeline. The Peace Pipeline was introduced in the early 1980s in order to transit gas from Iran to Pakistan and India (Mullick: 4). The United States considers the project as an aid to financing Iranian nuclear program and sponsorship of acts of terrorism; thus putting India under pressure to renounce the project (Kronstadt, 2007: 15).

Then U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice stressed in the Senate: “The United States has said to India clearly that it is concerned about its relations with Iran. We also have told the Indian authorities that conclusion of agreement with Iran on the construction of the pipeline makes us concerned which we do not



accept” (Saghafi Ameri, 2008: 205). Nicholas Burns, furthermore, indicates: “We have advised the Indians that India has to be consistent with the international community over the question of Iran. In other words, Iran must not be a country with nuclear arms. We are very hopeful that India would not reach a long-term agreement with Iran over oil and gas” (Burns, 2007).

On the other hand, the India-U.S. Agreement contains several provisions against Iran. According to the U.S.-India peaceful atomic energy cooperation known as the Hyde Act, India has to prevent or discourage Iran from nuclear activity and even if necessary, it has to boycott or bar Iran from search for acquiring weapons of mass destruction including nuclear capability, capacity for producing enriched uranium, process of producing nuclear fuel and the devices for launching weapons of mass destruction. Although due to opposition of certain leftist groups in India, this part of the Act is advisory, a glance at the India-Iran ties and Indian stances taken against Iran in the international forums within the past years, it can be seen that all the provisions of this Agreement have been implemented by India vis-à-vis Iran. After the Indian government signed the peaceful nuclear energy cooperation with the United States, it has acted very cautiously in its dealings with Iran, considering the conditions imposed by the United States rather securing its own interests. All these facts indicate that Indian entry into nuclear game and subsequently bilateral agreements with the United States have led the country to non-cooperation, neutrality and even in instances confrontation with Iran; a course of action the Islamic Republic of Iran has to avoid its adverse and threatening consequences by employing a delicate diplomacy (Pant, 2011: 62).

### **Conclusion**

India and Pakistan’s nuclear tests in 1998 affected the region and the international system in such a way that the two sides, with continued distrust, pursued their aggressive policies in the region particularly in



the State of Jammu and Kashmir and in Afghanistan. Their military hostilities in 1999, 2001-2002 and rupture of bilateral relations in 2008 indicate tensions in the region. The presence of extremist groups such as the al-Qaida and Taliban has increased insecurity; groups that seek to acquire nuclear weapons and have raided Pakistan's nuclear facilities several times. Moreover, disregarding the non-proliferation regime and treaties such as the NPT and CTBT, India and Pakistan acquired atomic bomb, preventing the progress of the non-proliferation regime and disarmament with nuclear trade, horizontal proliferation of nuclear material and technology and acquisition from the other countries. Examples include India-U.S. strategic agreement in 2005 and attempts by the Abdel Qadeer Khan Network.

Nuclear weapons possessed by India and Pakistan have adversely affected the national security of the Islamic Republic of Iran. High tensions along Iran and Pakistan borders have undermined Iran's security, because regional insecurity can easily spill over to Iran. Moreover, as a result of Indian and Pakistani nuclearization, more states surrounding Iran have sought to strengthen their military and defense capabilities, making hostilities and conflict in Iran's security environment more likely.

The presence of extremist groups and their motives to destroy their enemies including the West and the Shia have made Iran subject to even further catastrophic threats. Geographical proximity has also raised this danger. It is worth noting that on the one hand Iran is a target of nuclear terrorism and on the other, a number of states have seen Iran as an ally of terrorism, trying to taint Iran's prestige with such an excuse.

In spite of initial claims to the achievement of peaceful nuclear energy and undermining the non-proliferation regime, moreover, Indian and Pakistani nuclearization has created an aura of distrust of other nations that seek to attain nuclear energy. For this reason, in spite of Iran's efforts at proving the peaceful nature of its activities, constraints and sanctions imposed on Iran have continued. Even after



1998, India and Pakistan have engaged in certain acts to develop their nuclear programs that have harmed Iran including Indian demands for the conclusion of a strategic agreement with the United States. This agreement has been reached at the expense of reducing relations with Iran. It is well manifested in India's vote against Iran in the nuclear case, unwillingness to operationalize the Peace Pipeline and failure to pay its oil debts to Iran.

In a nutshell, it can be concluded that after India and Pakistan acquired nuclear weapons, the threatening nature of such weapons at the regional and international levels have been further highlighted. Iran has not also been immune to such consequences and after 1998, Iran's security has been affected by Indian and Pakistani nuclearization in a way that it has created tension and crisis in Iran's bilateral relations with other regional countries including the Persian Gulf states and other neighbors.

## References

- gAlam, Shah. October-December 2004. "Iran-Pakistan Relations: Political and Strategic Dimensions," *Strategic Analysis*.
- Ali, Syed Ghazanfar and Khalid, Iran. Summer 2006. "US-Pakistan Relations Post 9/11 Era," *National Development and Security*, Vol. XIII, No. 4.
- Anonymous. 27 November 2010. "India Changed its Vote at UN for Some Other Reasons: Iran," *The Hindu*, <http://www.thehindu.com/news/national/article915450.ece>.
- Asgarkhani Abumohammad. 2004. *International Regimes*, Tehran: Abrar.
- Baylis John and Smith Steve. 2009. *Globalization of Politics: International Relations in the Modern Age*, Vol. 2, Trans. Abolghasem Rahchamani, Tehran: Abrar.
- Bergen, Peter. 2011. Al-Qaeda, the Taliban, and Other Extremist Groups in Afghanistan and Pakistan, *New America Foundation*.
- Bhumitra, Chakama. 2009. *Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons*, London: Routledge.
- Bokhari, Sarah. 2006. "The United States Dealings with Nuclear Terrorism: Cooperation from Prevention," *Journal on Science and World Affairs*, Vol. 2, No. 1.
- Burke C. M & Zayering Lawrence. 1998. *History of Pakistan's Foreign Relations*, Trans. Iraj Vafaei, Tehran: Kavir.
- Burns, Nicholas. 23 October 2007. "America's Strategic opportunity with India" <http://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/63016/r-nicholas-burns/americas-strategicopportunity-with-India>.
- Carranza, Mario E. December 2006. "Can the NPT Survive? The Theory and Practice of US Nuclear Non-proliferation Policy after September 11," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Vol. 27, No. 3.
- Charnysh, Volha. 3 September 2009. "India's Nuclear Program," *Nuclear Age Peace Foundation*, [http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclearweapons/issues/proliferation/india/charnysh\\_india\\_analysis.pdf](http://www.nuclearfiles.org/menu/key-issues/nuclearweapons/issues/proliferation/india/charnysh_india_analysis.pdf).
- Cronin, Richard P. and Kronstadt, K. Alan and Squassoni, Sharon. 24 May 2005. "Pakistan's Nuclear Proliferation Activities and the Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission: U.S. Policy Constraints and Options," *Congressional Research Service*.
- Dadwal, Shebonti Ray. 8 July 2010. "US Sanctions on Iran and Their Impact on India" *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses*, (IDSA) New Delhi, <http://www.idsa.in/system/files/IB-USSanctionsonIran.pdf>.





- Delavarpour Aghdam, Mostafa. 2008. Comparison of the Process of Nuclearization in Iran, India and Paksitan, <http://vista.ir/?view=article&id=324032>.
- Desal, Jatin. 2000. *Nuclear Diplomacy the Art of the Deal*, New Delhi: Commonwealth Publishers.
- Dossani, Rafiq and Rowen, Henty S. 2005. *Prospect for Peace in South Asia*, California: Stanford University Press.
- Dudley, William Dudley and Jenkin, Laura. 2003. *India and Pakistan Opposing Viewpoints*, San Diego: Greenhaven Press.
- Feickert, Andrew and Kronstadt, K. Alan. 17 October 2003. "Missile Proliferation and the Strategic Balance in South Asia," *Congressional Research Service*.
- Ganguly, Sumit, Hagerty, Devin T. 2005. *Fearful Symmetry; India-Pakistan Crises in the Shadow of Nuclear Weapons*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Ganguly, Sumit and Kapur, S. Paul. 2010. *India, Pakistan and the Bomb*, New York: Colombia University Press.
- Gharibabadi Kazem. 2008, *Iranian Nuclear Program; Basic Facts*, Tehran: Foreign Ministry Press.
- Green, Jim and Franzoni, Sara. "Uranium, India and the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Regime," Energy Science Briefing Paper, 18.
- Hussain, Nazir. 13 July 2011. "Nuclearization of South Asia and the Future of Non-Proliferation," *Journal of Political Studies*. <http://pu.edu.pk/images/journal/pols/Currentissue-pdf/NAZIR%20HUSSAIN.pdf>.
- Jan, Reza. 12 may 2011. "After Bin Laden: Confronting Haqqani Network in Kurram," Small Wars Journal, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/760-jan.pdf>.
- Javaid, Umbreen. 2006. *Peace and Security in South Asia: Issues and Challenges*, Lahore: Pakistan Study Centre.
- Kapur, S. Paul. 2005. "India and Pakistan's Unstable Peace, Why Nuclear South Asia is not Like Cold War Europe," *International Security*, Vol. 30, No. 2.
- Kerr, Paul K. 8 April 2010. U.S. Nuclear Cooperation with India: Issues for Congress, *Congressional Research Service*.
- Kerr, Paul and Nikitin, Marry Beth. 14 January 2008. "Pakistan's Nuclear Weapons: Proliferation and Security Issues," *Congressional Research Service (CRS)*.
- Koosha, Soheila. 2010, Legal Challenges to the Prevention of and Struggle against Nuclear Terrorism, Tehran: Tarbiat Modarres University.
- Kronstadt, K. Alan. 26 June 2007. "India-US Relation," *CRS*. <http://fpc.xstate.gov/documents/organization/88044.pdf>.
- Larssen, Rolf Mowatt. 16 June 2008. "the Strategic Threat of Nuclear Terrorism," *The Washington Institute*.
- Liebl, Vernie. April-June 2009. "India and Pakistan: Competing Nuclear Strategies and Doctrines," *Comparative Strategy*, Vol. 28, No. 2.
- Majlesi Fereydoun. 2011. "Civility versus Tribalism," *Shargh Newspaper*, June 25.
- Meier, Oliver "Involving India and Pakistan: Nuclear Arms Control and Non-Proliferation



- after Nuclear Tests,” BITS Research Report 99.2, Berlin Information-Center for Transatlantic Security (BITS).
- Mirza, Nasrullah & Sadiq, M. January 2008. “Indo-US 123 Agreement: Impacts on Deterrence Stability in South Asia,” *South Asian Strategic Stability Institute*, SASSI Research Report 7.
- Mullick, Haider Ali Hussein “The Iran-Pakistan-India Pipeline Economics, Geopolitics and Security,” Pakistan Security Research Unity (PSRU), Brief number 36.
- Pant, Harsh V. Winter 2011. “India’s Relation with Iran: Much Ado about Nothing,” *The Washington Quarterly*.
- Rabasa, Angel and Blackwill, Robert D. and Chaik Peter. 2009. Lessons of Mumbai, *RAND Corporation*.
- Rajagopalan, Rajesh. October 2008. “Nuclear Non-Proliferation: An Indian Perspective,” Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), *New Delhi Briefing Paper 10*.
- Rajain, Arpit. 2005. Nuclear Deterrence in South Asia: China, India and Pakistan, New Delhi: Sage Publication.
- Ruth de Boer, Lucinda. July 2009. Analyzing Iran’s Foreign Policy; The Prospects and Challenges of Sino-Iranian Relations, MSc Program International Relations 2008-2009 Research Project: University of Amsterdam.
- Saghafi Ameri Nasser. 2008. *Iran and the Look to East Policy*, Tehran: Center for Strategic Research.
- Sagan, Scott D. and Waltz, Kenneth N. 2003. *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons; a Debate Renewed*, New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
- Shinichi, Ogava and Marie, Izuyama. March 2003. “the Nuclear Policy of India and Pakistan,” *NIDS Security Reports*, No. 4.
- Sokolski, Henry. December 2009. Pakistan’s Nuclear Future: Reining in the Risk, *Strategic Studies Institute*.
- Squassoni, Sharon. 8 November 2006. “India and Iran: WMD Proliferation Activities,” *Congressional Research Service*.
- Squassoin, Sharon. 12 January 2006. “US Nuclear Cooperation with India: Issues for Congress,” *Foreign Affairs*.
- Sridharan, E. 2007. *The India-Pakistan Nuclear Relationship: Theories of Deterrence and International Relations*, New Delhi: Routledge.
- Sridharan, E., A.Q. Khan. September 7, 2005. Nuclear Chronology, *Issue brief Non-Proliferation*, Vol. VIII. No. 8.
- Tashpinar Omar. 2010. “Fragile India-Pakistan Peace,” Trans. Arezou Daylamaghani, <http://www.irdiplomacy.ir/fa/news/32/bodyView/3335/0>.
- Tohidi Omulbanin. 2007. “New Indian Foreign Policy Orientation,” *Asian Powers*, No. 6.
- United Nations. 2005. International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, <http://www-ns.iaea.org/downloads/conventions-codes-solutions/suppression-fterrorism-convention.pdf>.