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Nonproliferation: A Plan for Dealing With Pakistan

Since Pakistan embarked on an effort in 1972 to acquire a nuclear bomb, the U.S. has worked to block that development through a series of foreign policy decisions. Since 1 October, 1990, U.S. aid and most arms sales to Pakistan have been suspended. Despite the aid cut-off, Pakistan has not taken adequate steps, in Congress' view, to stop its weapons related programs. As a result, there is now considerable debate within Congress and the policy community as to the next step the U.S. should take to obtain an appropriate Pakistani response.

Background and Analysis

To understand the dynamics driving the push for nuclear weapons in South Asia one needs to consider the basic security concerns of the region's nations.

China-Russia. Since the Sino-Soviet split the Chinese have considered the Soviets their primary threat. With the Soviets already possessing a nuclear arsenal, China embarked on its own nuclear weapons program that produced a successful nuclear detonation in 1964 (Senate Rep, 2).

India-China. India has been defeated twice by China, in 1959 and 1962. The 1962 attack by a small Chinese force along the disputed northeastern border produced a humiliating defeat for the Indians and a fear of China that dominates Indian strategic thinking today. The 1964 Chinese nuclear explosion spurred an Indian program that produced its own successful

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nuclear test in 1974 (Senate Rep. 2). As of 1992, Leonard S. Spector of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace credited India with enough fissionable material for 75 or more weapons, although, they officially claim not to have assembled any weapons (Cronin, 6). India produces enough material for 12-18 additional weapons annually (Senate Rep, vii).

Pakistan-India. Pakistan and India have been involved in conflict three times--1947-48, 1965, and 1971-72. As a result of Pakistan's 1972 defeat it lost over 50 per cent of its pre-1971 population to the creation of Bangladesh. Faced with an Indian rival that outnumbered it 7-to-1, Pakistan started its own nuclear weapons program in 1972 (Senate Rep, 2). India's own successful test in 1974 made Pakistan's program all the more vital. The Carnegie Endowment estimates Pakistan has enough material for 10-15 weapons (Cronin, 6). Pakistan also claims to not have an inventory of nuclear weapons, but annual production would support the assembly of an additional 1 to 2 weapons each year (Senate Rep, vii).

From a U.S. perspective, South Asia is where nuclear weapons technology came to the Third World in the form of the 1974 Indian test. Combined with the fact both India and Pakistan have refused to sign the 1968 Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), South Asia became a logical place for the U.S. to take a stand on nonproliferation. While Israel has probably had nuclear weapons since the 1960s and has also refused to sign the NPT, any efforts to make an issue of an Israeli nuclear bomb have been a political non-starter--a position Pakistan feels is extremely "misguided" (Naqvi).

Combining the individual security concerns of China, India, and Pakistan with the U.S. position on nonproliferation in South Asia, it would appear that any U.S. policy to enforce nonproliferation in Pakistan must be directly tied to India and China. Unfortunately, due to a perceived lack of leverage with India (FY 1988 economic and military aid to Pakistan was over \$600 million yet only \$104 million to India [Senate Rep, iv]), U.S. efforts, especially Congressional activity, to control proliferation have fallen hardest on Pakistan.

Congressional Activity. Because of Congress' interest in the nonproliferation issue several different initiatives have been incorporated into law. Section 669 of the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA), commonly referred to as the Symington Amendment, was signed into law in 1976 and prohibits aid under that act to any nation delivering or acquiring from another country uranium enrichment technology that is not subject to International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspection. In 1979 the Carter Administration invoked Section 669 and suspended aid to Pakistan after intelligence information confirmed Pakistan was building a secret uranium enrichment facility with equipment illegally obtained from the U.S. and other nations (Cronin, 1).

In 1981 Congress passed Section 620E to the FAA allowing the President the authority to waive the provisions of Section 669 if he decides it is in the national interest (Cronin, 14). The Reagan Administration invoked 620E to allow the resumption of aid to Pakistan in view of the threat posed by the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. During the early 1980s intelligence continued to confirm Pakistan was maintaining its clandestine program to

develop a nuclear weapon. As a result, Congress added subsection (e) to Section 620E requiring the President to make an annual certification to Congress that Pakistan does not possess a nuclear explosive device (Cronin, 1). Coincident with the Soviet pull-out from Afghanistan and the end of the Cold War, aid to Pakistan was again suspended in 1990 when President Bush failed to certify Pakistan did not possess a nuclear weapon.

The 1990 aid suspension in accordance with Section 620E(e) was interpreted by the Bush administration to apply only to "aid-financed or government-to-government" sales. As a result, more than \$100 million in export licenses were approved in FY1990 and FY1991 (Cronin,3). Some member of Congress want to see all military and technology sales to Pakistan stopped. If that happens Pakistan may feel that it has no other option but to seek weapons from other sources to meet its basic security needs. The Japan Economic Newswire reported on 17 January, 1993, that, "Pakistan has started looking to east European and central Asian countries as well as Russia for military hardware because of growing pressure on Pakistan to sign a nuclear nonproliferation treaty...".

Stopping all aid to Pakistan could also give India reason not to take part in any bilateral negotiations with Pakistan to eliminate nuclear weapons. An Indo-Pakistani agreement ridding South Asia of nuclear weapons would allow the U.S. to resume military aid to Pakistan--something India does not desire and which it can prevent by just refusing to negotiate with Pakistan.

From an overall policy perspective, Section 669 has never been applied to another nation besides Pakistan (Cronin, 1).

This is because the major nonproliferation amendments to the FAA deal with obtaining or transferring weapons or weapons technology to/from another country. Thus, any nation that is technologically sophisticated enough to develop its weapons without requiring knowledge or materials from another country is not penalized. In South Asia, India has such an indigenous capability while Pakistan does not. Given that Israel also is technologically sophisticated, one can ponder if India has benefitted from legislation that was carefully crafted to avoid placing the U.S. and Israel in conflict.

Recommended Course of Action

Continued efforts by the U.S. to focus the nonproliferation issue in South Asia on Pakistan are doomed to failure. The U.S. instead needs to first focus on preventing India and Pakistan from assembling nuclear weapons to reduce the risk of any India-Pakistan conventional conflict from going nuclear and to support our world-wide nonproliferation efforts. An ultimate solution for South Asia will need to consider the interrelated security concerns of Pakistan, India, and China. The U.S. should play on those security concerns to promote the establishment of a Greater South Asian Nuclear Free Zone (GSANFZ) that will eliminate the proliferation problem in Pakistan and India (Senate Rep, 24-25).

Preventing the assembly of nuclear weapons. Efforts to prevent India and Pakistan from assembling weapons need to work at building confidence and trust between the two nations. An initial step was taken in 1990 when an Indo-Pakistani agreement not to attack each other's nuclear energy facilities was signed.

This is one of many proposals made by Pakistan over the past few years (Senate Rep, 23). The agreement eliminates the concern over contamination following a conventional attack, and reduces the incentive to build weapons so they can be dispersed for survival.

A second proposal to build confidence was made by a U.S. delegation traveling in South Asia and drew interest from both Pakistan and India. The proposal is for both countries to have an additional nuclear facility inspected, thus safeguarding the material from that plant from being used for weapons production (Senate Rep. 22). The other country would select the facility to be inspected and the inspections would be conducted by the IAEA or the other country. India currently has six nuclear reactors and two reprocessing plants. Only four nuclear reactors which were supplied by the West are currently under IAEA inspection. Pakistan currently has one Canadian-supplied nuclear reactor that is under IAEA safeguards and one unsafeguarded uranium enrichment facility.

The plan has advantages for both nations. Pakistan would be granted its long standing demand to be treated as an equal with India on nuclear matters. It would also allow Pakistan to inspect the facility where 70 per cent of India's fissile material is produced (Senate Rep, 22). For India, the ability to inspect Pakistan's only plant for producing fissile material would effectively deny Pakistan's weapons program access to its only current source for weapons-grade materials. Thus Pakistan's ability to produce additional weapons would be capped, while India still maintained a limited weapons option to counter China.

While this proposal limits each countries ability to expand it weapons production capability, it does not eliminate the stockpiles of fissile material that have already been produced. Thus, each nation would still have some capability to produce weapons. Also, in the long term, each country could build additional nuclear facilities to overcome the lost production capability (Senate Rep. 23). Although the plan seems to favor India, Pakistan is currently the biggest supporter--probably because the Pakistanis realize they will in all likelihood never have the capability to totally destroy India, while India will be able to destroy Pakistan at some point in the future because of its greater weapons production capability. This proposal moves the threat of Pakistan's destruction to some future time.

Greater South Asia Nuclear Free Zone. Pakistan has already made it clear that it is willing to give up its nuclear weapons program and sign the NPT if India does the same. Since it is clear that any effort to eliminate India's nuclear weapons must include China, it might be possible to craft a plan to control proliferation in Greater South Asia--India, Pakistan, Tibet and adjacent areas in China, and part of the Indian Ocean. The GSANFZ would (1) eliminate all nuclear weapons in India, Pakistan, and Tibet, (2) remove China's short and intermediate range missiles and fighter-bomber aircraft from range of India, and (3) ban the deployment of nuclear armed submarines and bombers in parts of the Indian Ocean (Senate Rep. 24).

For India, Pakistan would be eliminated as a nuclear threat, the redeployment of Chinese forces would reduce their threat, and the possibility of South Asia becoming part of the battlefield in

a U.S.-Soviet exchange would be reduced. It is unclear if this would be sufficiently attractive for India to give up its nuclear option; however, India itself has proposed a "three-tier" approach to arms control that would freeze China at its current levels and require India to remain nonnuclear (Senate Rep. 22).

For China, GSANFZ would eliminate a potential nuclear threat by India from its southern border. However, since India is seen by China as a minor threat (with Russia as the primary threat) it may be difficult to get the Chinese to accept restrictions on their nuclear deployments for what they might see as a low pay-back. However, Chinese forces might be redeployed to minimize the threat to India (meeting the proposed deployment restrictions) and still be able to strike Soviet targets. Removing weapons from Tibet would also marginally help China in its relationship with the Tibetan people since their removal is a major goal of the Dalai Lama, who still commands the allegiance of the Tibetan people (Senate Rep, 25). If the proposal is supported by the U.S., the Chinese may feel the potential benefits from endorsing the U.S. position outweigh the restrictions on their nuclear forces.

From a U.S. perspective, GSANFZ should not present a major policy conflict. We have no strategic need to utilize the Indian Ocean, and the removal of tactical nuclear weapons from ships by President Bush precludes transit problems that were a major issue in the past. While there would still be an issue posed by current U.S. policy to neither confirm or deny the presence of nuclear weapons on a specific ship or installation, this may be the point in time where the benefits of enhancing

nonproliferation make it logical to change that policy. Indeed, GSANFZ would eliminate the problem of a nuclear Pakistan, which has been a vexing foreign policy problem for the past sixteen years, and additionally would provide a weapons free India that would even further support U.S. nonproliferation policy.

Conclusion

As stated earlier, the current U.S. policy of focusing our South Asian nonproliferation efforts on Pakistan is a doomed and misguided endeavor. The U.S. decision during the 1980s to place the Soviet threat posed by the invasion of Afghanistan ahead of nonproliferation concerns in Pakistan, followed by a rapid shift back to an emphasis on nonproliferation once the Soviet threat disappeared, made it difficult for Pakistan to determine true U.S. intentions. Combined with the way Congress has crafted nonproliferation legislation that appears to attack Pakistan while ignoring India, it is clear that past U.S. nonproliferation policy in South Asia has not been very balanced. Continued efforts to design nonproliferation policy without considering Pakistan's security concerns may force that nation to seek other sources to meet its military equipment requirements and ultimately lead to a break in relations.

For any nonproliferation scheme for Pakistan to succeed, it will have to have a balance reflecting on the understanding that security concerns of Pakistan, India, and China are all related. As a starting point, the U.S. needs to stress improvements in Indo- Pakistan relations to eliminate the need for these two nations to produce nuclear weapons. Bilateral discussions to

have another nuclear facility in each nation inspected would be a step in that direction.

Ultimately, if nonproliferation is truly going to be a major portion of its foreign policy, the U.S. needs to endorse a plan that takes away the capability of Pakistan and India to produce nuclear weapons. Again, a balanced approach that considers the security concerns of all the parties concerned is most likely to succeed. Creating a Greater South Asian Nuclear Free Zone is one potential plan.

With patience and a balanced policy for South Asia, it will be possible to build up trust within the region first to limit the production of nuclear weapons and ultimately to eliminate the capability to produce them. The process will not be swift and it will require concessions on the part of the U.S. and China, but the results could play a significant role in the success of the broader U.S. policy of seeking to stop the proliferation of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons and their associated long range delivery systems in the rest of the third world.

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